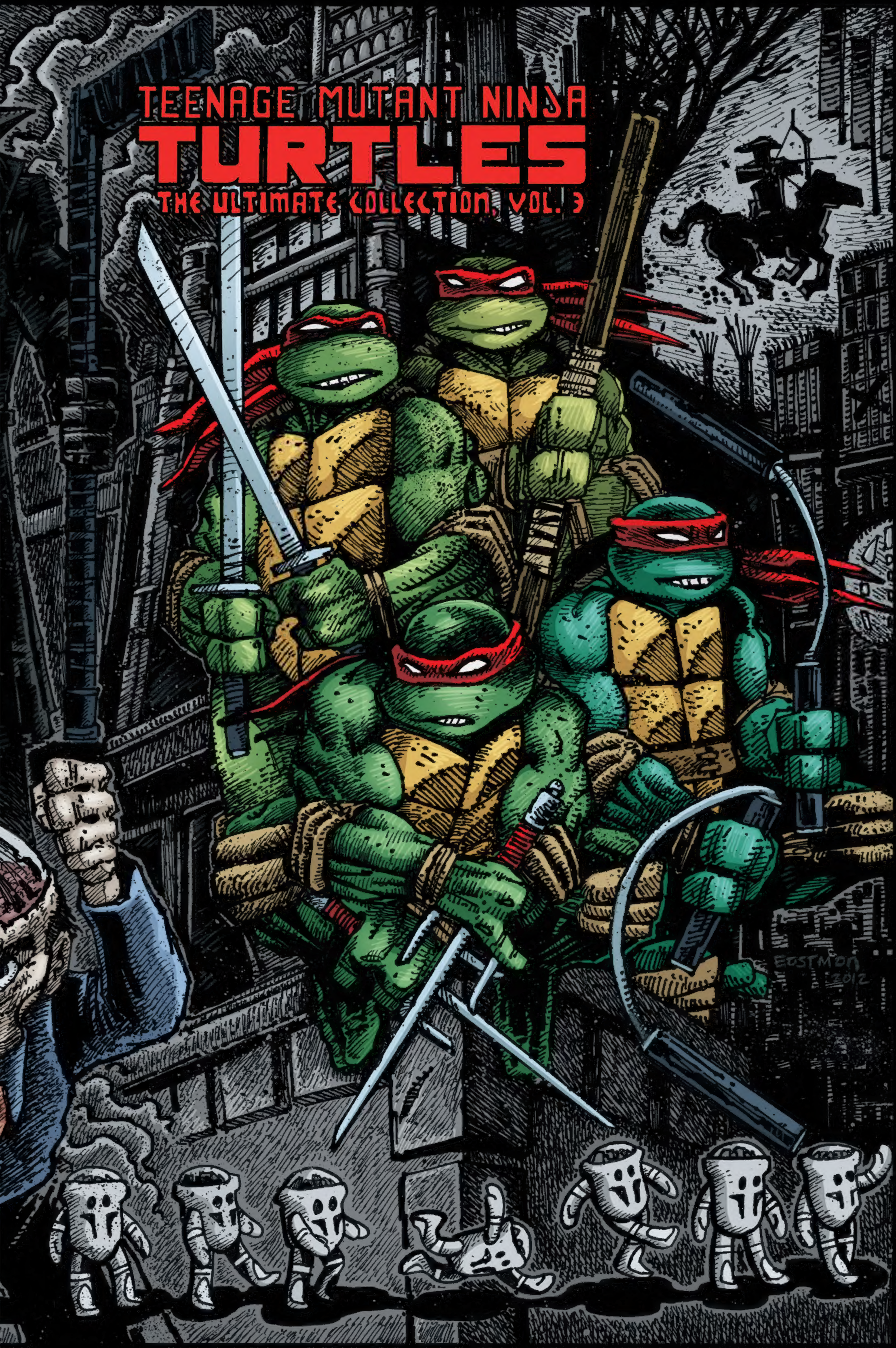
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION, VOL. 3



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

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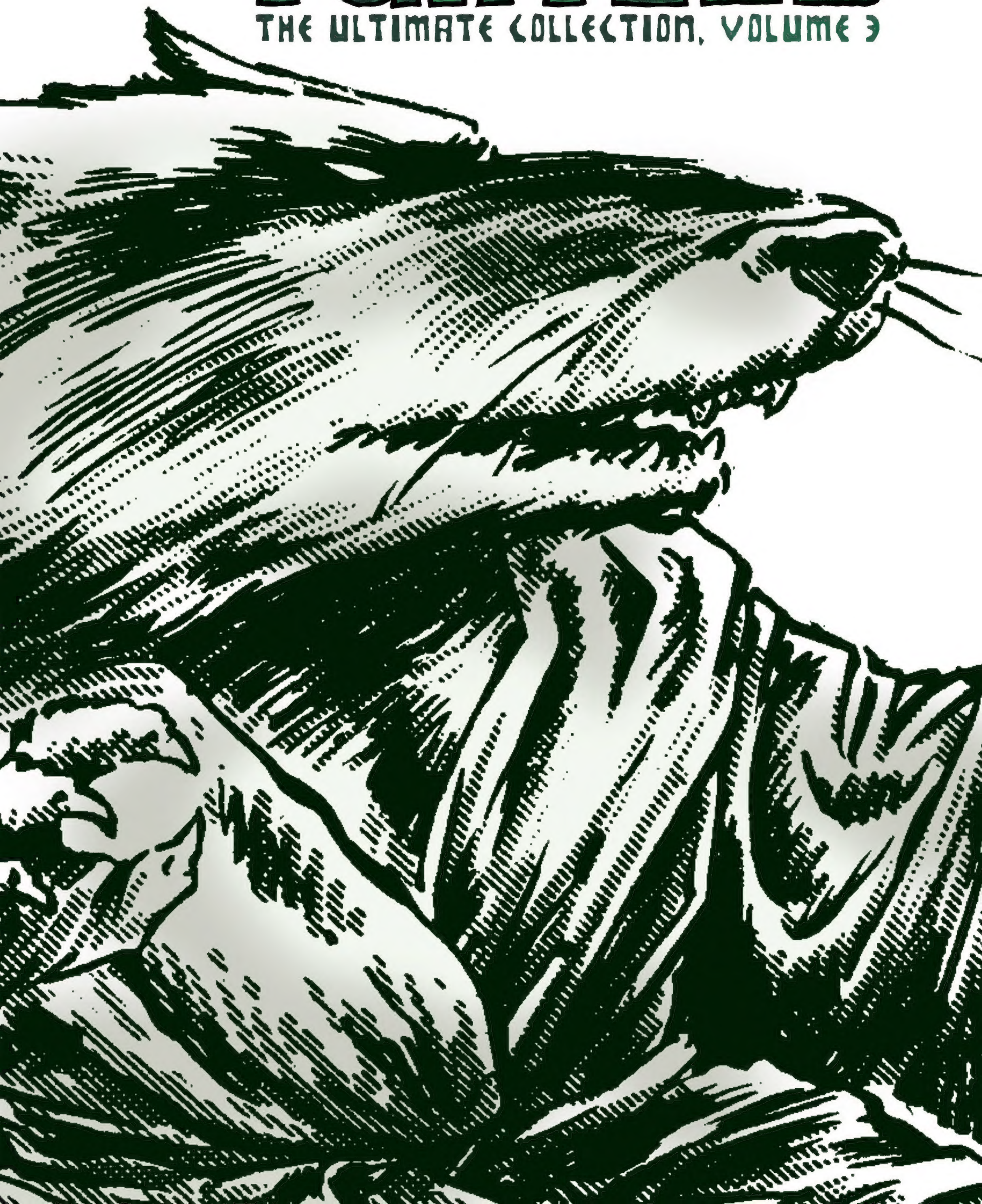

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PAGE 4

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES #12
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Survivalists.

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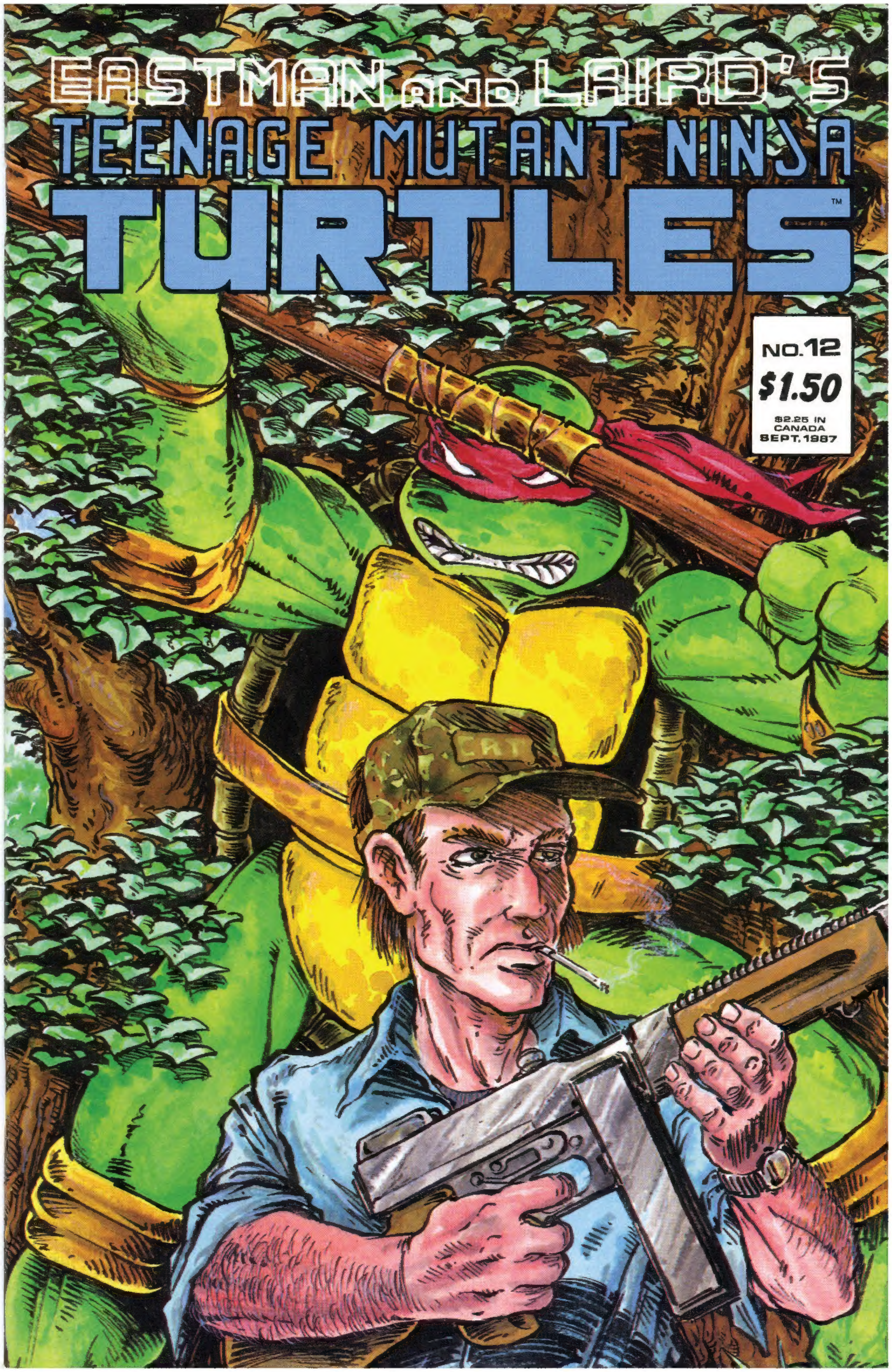
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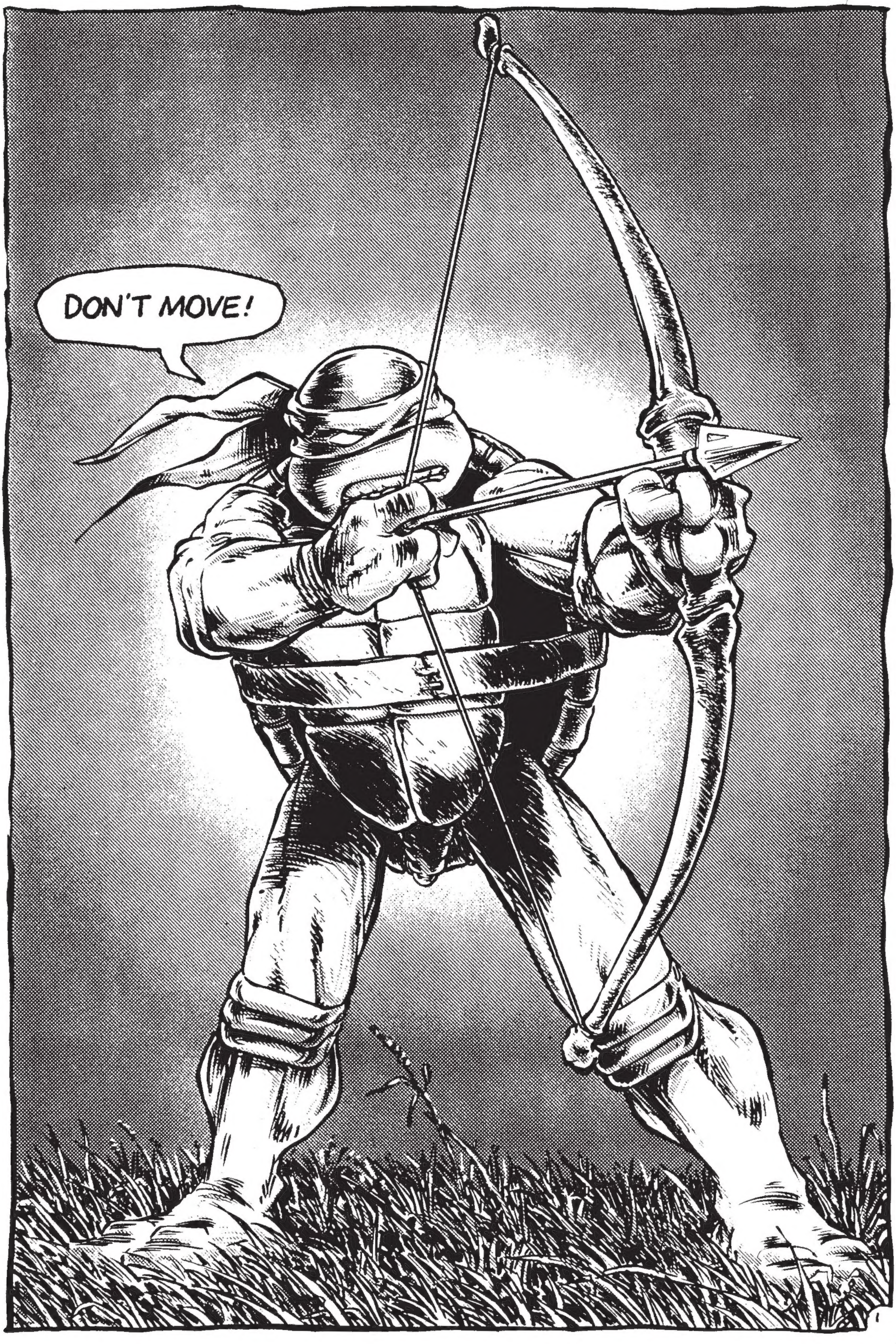

DON'T MOVE!

STHOK!

PRETTY GOOD, EH, DON?
LET'S TRY IT WITH A BANANNA THIS TIME!

NO THANKS, MIKE-- NINE APPLES SHOT OFF MY HEAD IS PLENTY FOR ONE DAY!
AND IF YOU REALLY WANT TO HELP MAKE THE FRUIT SALAD, THERE IS A MUCH EASIER WAY!
MUNCH!

YEAH, C'MON, WILLAM TELL... THIS IS A PICNIC, NOT AN ARCHERY MATCH!
OKAY, OKAY!

HURRY UP AN' CHOW DOWN, DUDES!

SPLINTER SAYS HE'LL TEACH ME SOME NINJA STUFF AFTER LUNCH!

WHATEVER!

THAT'S NINJITSU, CASEY!

ARCHERY SURE WORKS UP A THIRST -- IS THAT DIET PEPSI COLD?

HERE, MIKE -- HAVE A HUMMUS SALAD POCKET!

HEY -- SHHH!

THAT NOISE -- SOMEONE'S COMING -- FAST!

THE ROCHES

3

YAAAHHH!
THE ROCHES
LETTERING: STEVE LAVIGNE
EVERYTHING ELSE: PETER LAIRD
4
5

AAAAUHHHMPH!

M-MY GLASSES-- W-WHERE ARE THEY?

I CAN'T SEE A THING WITHOUT MY GLASSES!

OH... REALLY?

WHOOPS! DIDN'T SEE 'EM LYING THERE!

KRUNCH

YOU JERK! WHERE D'YOU GET OFF RUININ' OUR PICNIC?!

P-PICNIC?

WLLY, I OUGHTA POUND YOU!

6

Y-YOU'RE JUST HAVING A... PICNIC? YOU'RE NOT WITH THOSE CRAZY SURVIVALISTS!?

T-THANK GOD! I THOUGHT I HAD IT FOR CERTAIN!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU JABBERIN' ABOUT?

CASEY, PUT HIM DOWN...

NOW, JUST BE CALM... DON'T BE AFRAID... AND START FROM THE BEGINNING. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

M-MY NAME IS MICHAEL MURPHY... I--I'M A GRAD STUDENT IN PHYSICS AT U-MASS...

...BUT FOR THE LAST FIVE WEEKS I'VE BEEN THE PRISONER OF A BUNCH OF LUNATICS!

THE ROGUES

THEY'RE SURVIVALISTS... REALLY A PRETTY EXTREME FRINGE GROUP-- CALLING THEMSELVES THE "COMMITTEE TO REBUILD AMERICAN PATRIOTISM." WHAT PATRIOTISM HAS TO DO WITH THEIR GOALS, I DON'T KNOW... ANYWAY, THEY KIDNAPPED ME TO MAKE A --A NUCLEAR WEAPON-- A BOMB-- FOR THEM..!

GOOD LORD--! WHAT FOR?!

SEE, THEIR IDEA IS THAT THE INEVITABLE US/USSR NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION IS TAKING TOO LONG... THEY'RE AFRAID THEY'LL MISS IT-- AND NEVER GET TO PROVE HOW WORTHY THEY ARE... WHAT GOOD SURVIVALISTS THEY ARE! THEY'RE INSANE--!

SO THEY WANT AN ATOM BOMB, TO SET OFF AT SOME CRITICAL MILITARY INSTALLATION... THEY THINK THAT WILL START THE WAR!

THIS BOMB-- DID YOU BUILD IT? WILL IT WORK?

I-I HAD TO! THEY THREATENED TO KILL ME! AND... IT SHOULD WORK... ALL THE PARTS ARE THERE...

BUT LISTEN-- WE CAN'T WASTE ANYTIME! THESE GUYS HAVE TO BE STOPPED-- BEFORE THEY--

KKRRAKKK!

HIT THE DIRT, APRIL!
CASEY..!

LEO, IS HE--?!
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE AN IMMEDIATELY FATAL WOUND... BUT HE'S BLEEDING PRETTY HEAVILY!
AAAEGH...!

CAN'T SEE ANYONE..!
WHOEVER'S SHOOTING AT US...
...MUST BE USING A TELESCOPIC SIGHT!
DAMN...

...I THINK I JUST WOUNDED THAT FOOL!
PRETTY GOOD SHOT, SKONK-- 600 YARDS THROUGH HEAVY BRUSH!
10

SOMETHIN' WEIRD GOIN' ON... DITCHOO SEE THEM KIDS IN THEM... TURTLE COSTUMES?

YES... I SAW THEM... AND THE BIG DUDE AND THE CHICK, AND THEIR DOG.

TOO BAD THEY RAN INTO OUR FRIEND...

...NOW THEY'RE ALL HISTORY.

PEWK, CHET-- HEAD DOWN THAT GORGE ON THE LEFT... SPUDS AND BUBBA, YOU GO RIGHT, FOLLOW THAT STREAM...

...I'LL TAKE THE MIDDLE...

THEY'LL PROBABLY TRY A FLANKING MOVE... WE HAVE TO GET THIS KID OUT OF HERE!

THE CAR'S NOT TOO FAR AWAY, LEO-- CASEY AND I CAN TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL... CAN YOU GUYS KEEP THOSE SURVIVALISTS OFF OUR BACKS?

NO PROBLEM, APRIL!

--WE'LL NAIL THESE YAHOOS, BUT GOOD! THEN DON CAN DISARM THE BOMB, AND--

HEY! HANG ON THERE FOR A MINUTE, RAPHAEL! FIRST, TAKING OUT THESE GUYS ISN'T GOING TO BE A WALK IN THE PARK--THEY'RE PROBABLY ALL ARMED WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS! SECOND, I MAY OR MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DISARM THE BOMB! AND THIRD, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A NUCLEAR DEVICE, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

MAYBE WE SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT GETTING THE HECK OUT OF HERE! IF THAT THING WORKS AND IT GOES OFF, WE CAN KISS OUR BUTTS GOOD BYE!

--ALONG WITH EVERY OTHER LIVING THING WITHIN A FIVE MILE RADIUS!

MAYBE THIS TIME, DISCRETION IS THE BETTER PART OF VALOR!

WHA--?! I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WHAT A WIMP! NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE YOU CHICKEN OUT--

RAPHAEL, IF YOU WEREN'T SO AGGRESSIVELY STUPID, YOU'D SEE THAT WE'RE DEALING WITH SOMETHING MORE THAN A **DAMN FIRECRACKER**, YOU MORON!

THEM'S FIGHTIN' WORDS, **STICK BOY!**

HEY! ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, **BONEHEAD!**

STOP!

DONATELLO HAS A VALID POINT-- THERE ARE HUMAN AGENCIES TO DEAL WITH THINGS LIKE THIS. OUR TASK NOW IS TO GET THIS WOUNDED BOY TO SAFETY... AND TO DO THAT, WE MUST ACT AS A REAR GUARD FOR CASEY AND APRIL!

TAKE HIM TO COOLEY-DICKINSON, APRIL-- IT'S CLOSEST! WE'LL MEET BACK AT THE FARM. BE CAREFUL... BUT BE SWIFT!

YOU TOO, SPLINTER! GOOD LUCK!

GRRR...! I'D RATHER STAY HERE AND KNOCK SOME HEADS!

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO, MY SONS... REMEMBER YOUR STEALTH TRAINING!

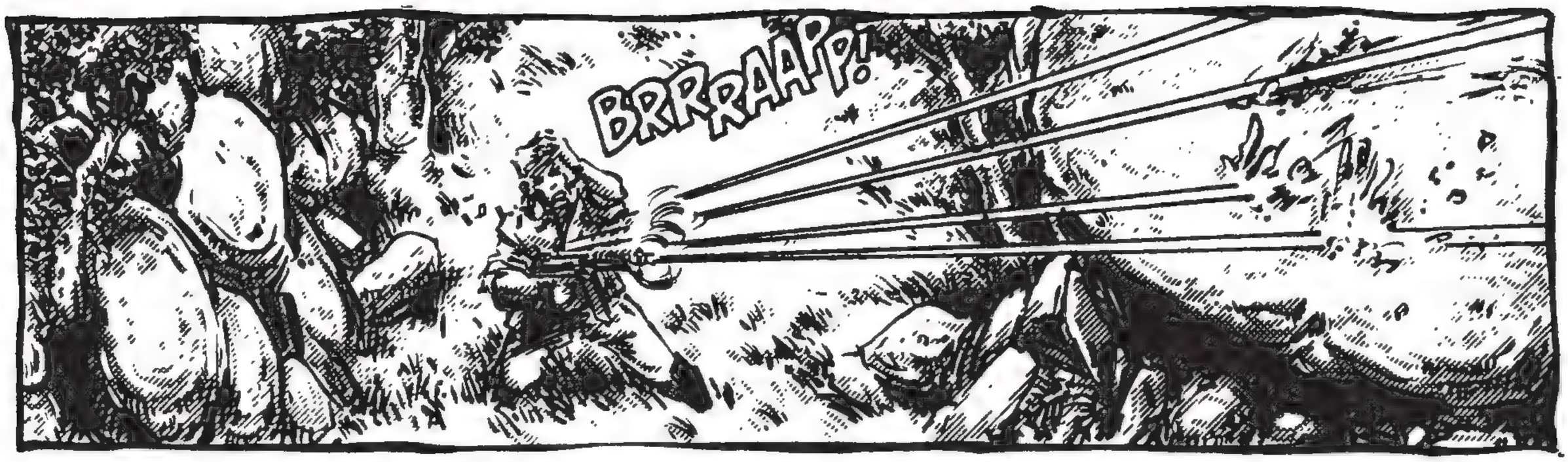
...I ONLY PRAY THAT OUR SKILLS WILL BE ENOUGH!

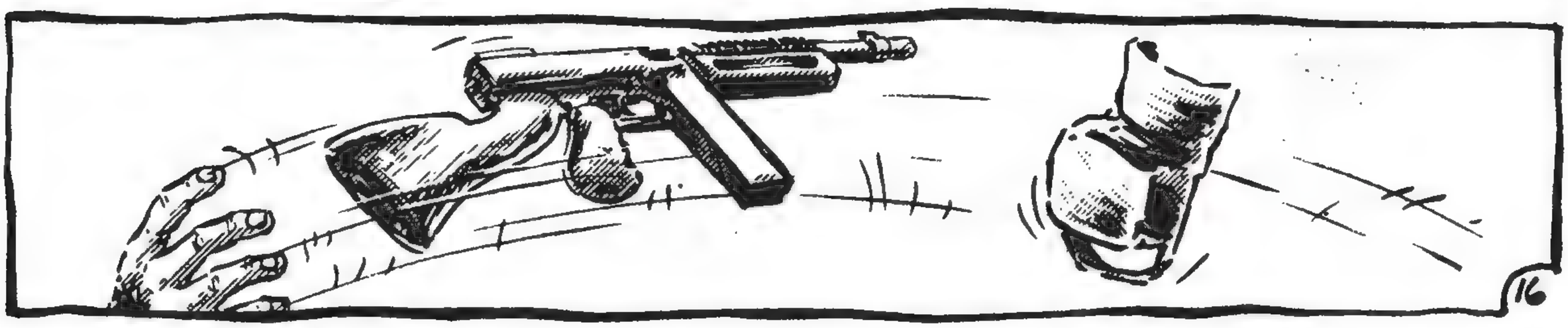
14

PEWK, TAKE THAT LEFT TRAIL ... I'LL JIG RIGHT.. SHOOT ANYTHING THAT MOVES!

BAF!

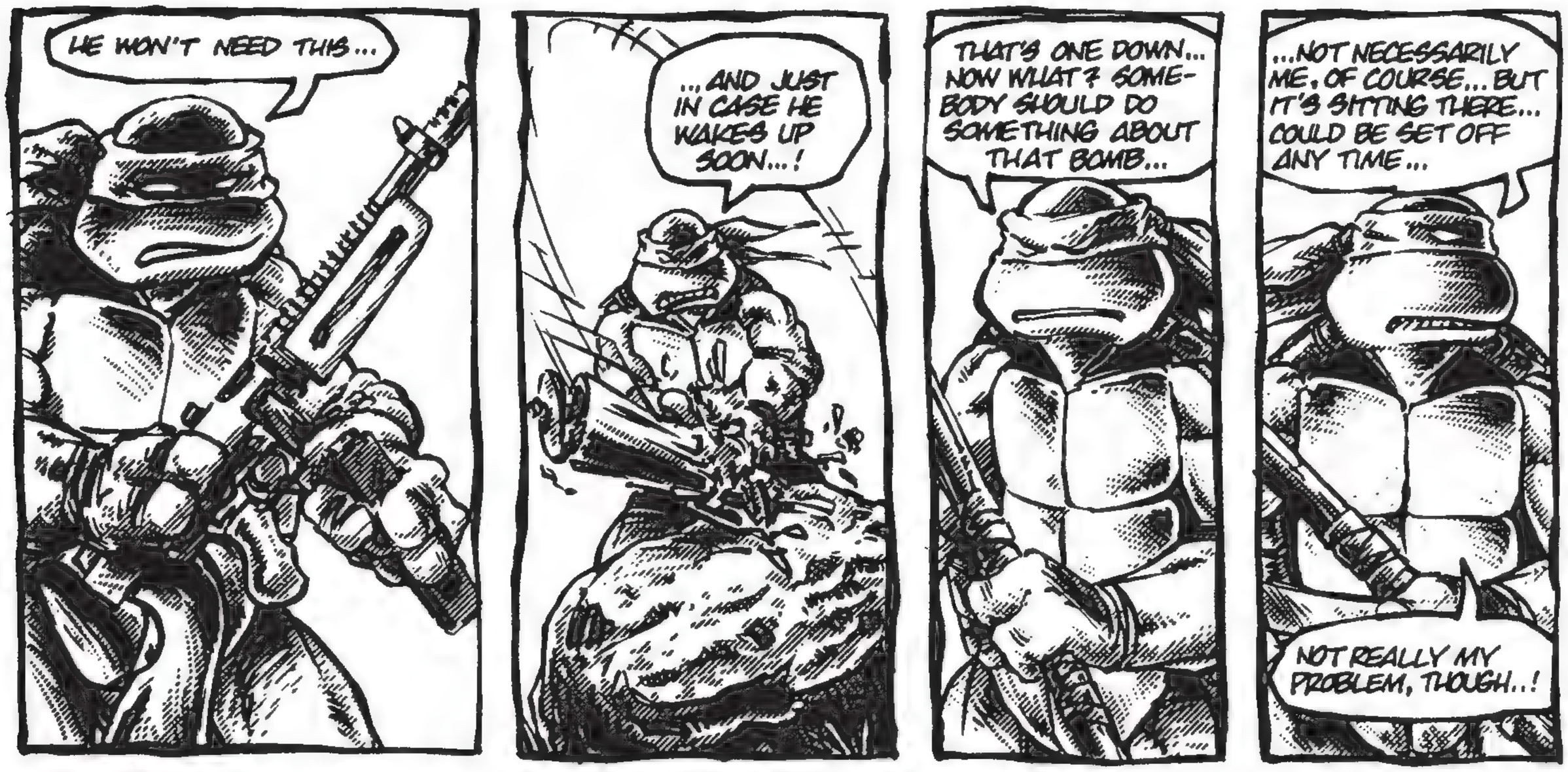
15


BRRRAAPP!


16

THUD!

OUT COLD... GOOD!


HE WON'T NEED THIS...
...AND JUST IN CASE HE WAKES UP SOON...!
THAT'S ONE DOWN... NOW WHAT? SOMEBODY SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT BOMB...
...NOT NECESSARILY ME, OF COURSE... BUT IT'S SITTING THERE... COULD BE SET OFF ANY TIME...
NOT REALLY MY PROBLEM, THOUGH..!

OH, HELL..!
17

TAP

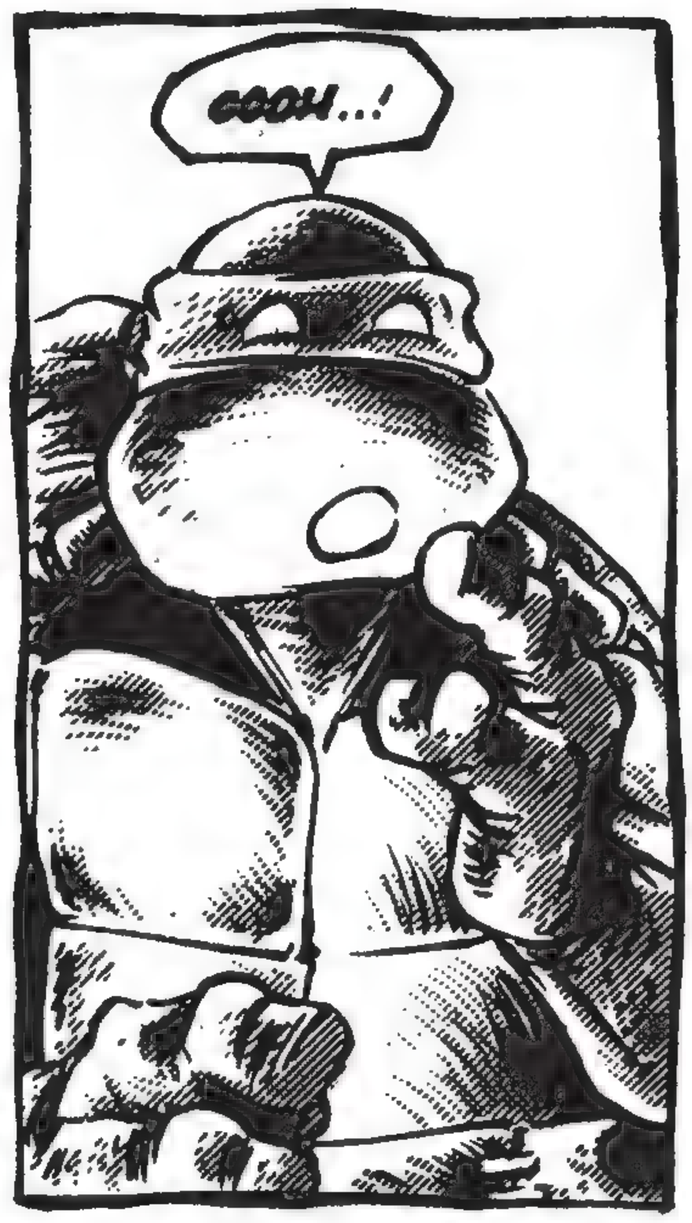
WHUH?

YAAAH!!!

HEY, PAL -- DIDN'T YOUR MOM TELL YOU ABOUT THESE THINGS? -- " YOU'LL PUT YOUR EYE OUT, KID!"

H-HEY-- STAY B-BACK--!

-- I KNOW HOW TO USE THIS THING, MAN!


OOOH..!

THIS IS JUST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!

19

20
21

I SENSE THAT YOU ARE THE ONE NAMED SKONK...

ABANDON YOUR MAD COURSE -- IT WILL BRING ONLY GRIEF!

IF YOU DO NOT -- WE MUST STOP YOU!

YEAH? TRY STOPPIN' SOME OF THIS .223 PUPPY CHOW, ROVER!

NOW... HUH?!

WHERE'D IT GO?

POINT BLANK RANGE -- I COULDN'T HAVE MISSED IT..!

AAGH!

--UGGCCK!!!

GARGH!-- THAT HURT--!

DAMN! TALKIN' KUNG-FU MUTTS -- THIS WORLD IS REALLY GOIN' TO HELL!

THAT NERVE JAB SHOULD HAVE RENDERED YOU HELPLESS-- YOU ARE INDEED A STRONG ONE...

HOLD STILL, YOU FLEA-BITTEN--!

PERHAPS A CRANE STRIKE...

...HERE!

CHOK!

23

SUBTLETY OVER STRENGTH... A VALUABLE LESSON FOR YOU, SKONK...

UHH!... OW... M-MY SIDE...!

TAKE HEED OF IT... AND ACCEPT AN HONORABLE SURRENDER!

EVEN NOW, MY STUDENTS ARE DISABLING YOUR PLANS.. DISMANTLING YOUR MACHINERY OF HATE!

YOUR ILL DESIGNS STOP HERE..!

GUESS AGAIN, FREAK!

YOUF!

I'M NOT THROUGH YET--!

:KAF: UHH... MUCH STRONGER... THAN I THOUGHT!

JUST GOTTA GET BACK--

--TO THE BUNKER!

24

"SEEK AN YE SHALL AND"...

LOOKS PRETTY INNOCUOUS...

BUT LOOKS, AS THEY SAY, CAN BE DECEIVING... BETTER BE WARY OF BOOBY TRAPS...

NICE LITTLE HIDE-OUT... PRACTICALLY INVISIBLE IN THESE THICK WOODS... BARBED WIRE FENCE TO KEEP THE IDLY CURIOUS OUT... THOSE THAT COME THIS FAR, THAT IS...

DON'T HEAR ANYONE AROUND-- MY BET IS THEY ALL TOOK OFF AFTER THE KID WHEN HE BOOGIED OUT...

MAY AS WELL TRY THIS DOOR...

I'M SURPRISED AT THE LACK OF SURVEILANCE ELECTRONICS... THEY MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR ISOLATED LOCATION...

THEN AGAIN, WHO EVER THINKS THEIR NEIGHBOR IS BUILDING AN A-BOMB?!

CLICK!

CHOK!

SO MUCH FOR A WELCOME MAT..!

NOW WHERE WOULD I STORE A NUCLEAR DEVICE...?

PROBABLY...

BINGO!

GEEZ, BUDDA, I DON'T KNOW... THIS IS ALL STARTIN' TO LOOK LIKE A BAD IDEA..!

JES' BE COOL, SPUDS... REMEMBER, WE GOT FIREPOWER! AND ONCE WE ICE THAT KID, WE'RE HOME FREE!

I-I GUESS I DIDN'T EXPECT WE'D HAVE TO KILL ANYBODY..!

SPUDS, YOU TURKEY-- WHAT'D YA THINK THE BOMB WAS FOR!?

OH... RIGHT...

ALI SWEAR, SPUDS, SOME-TIMES YOU--

WHA--?!

27

28
29

WHUF!

FZCK!

GRRR!

30

YUGGA YUGGA!

TRUST ME, PAL-- YOU NEED THIS BATH! HEH, HEH!

RAPHAEL, STOP! DON'T KILL THAT MAN!

AW, HECK-- JUST HAVIN' A L'IL FUN! OH, WELL...

...G'NITE, GRACE!

BAP!

THOSE TWO ARE NEUTRALIZED, MASTER SPLINTER...

...AND MICHAELANGELO SAYS HE AND DONATELLO TOOK OUT TWO OTHERS. THAT LEAVES THE LEADER, SKONK...

...WHO, I'M SORRY TO SAY, ESCAPED FROM ME... AND I BELIEVE IS HEADED BACK TO HIS BOMB!

DONATELLO IS MISSING... WE'LL LOOK FOR HIM LATER, BUT FOR NOW WE MUST TRY TO STOP SKONK QUICKLY!

GOT TO ASSUME THE OTHERS DIDN'T MAKE IT BACK... SO NOW I'M ALONE...

...IT'S UP TO ME TO CARRY OUT WHAT'S LEFT OF OUR PLAN!

SOMEHOW, I KNEW IT WOULD COME DOWN TO THIS... ME--

AND MY RADIO-- CONTROLLED TRIGGER!

THOSE WEIRDOS WILL BE COMING SOON... GOT TO GAIN THE HIGH GROUND... MAKE MY LAST STAND...!

HORATIO AT THE BRIDGE... CUSTER AT LITTLE BIG HORN... ME ON THIS ROOF... DIFFERENT TIMES, DIFFERENT MEN...

...BUT ALL ESSENTIALLY THE SAME!

HMMM... LOOKS LIKE I GOT UP HERE JUST IN TIME...!

HAH!

YOU'RE TOO LATE, YOU COMMIE FREAKS!

32

MASTER SPLINTER! IS THAT--?!

SKONK! LISTEN TO ME! YOU MUST CONSIDER YOUR PATH MORE CAREFULLY--

--CONSIDER THE THOUSANDS OF INNOCENTS WHO WILL PERISH IF YOU UNLEASH THE FURY OF YOUR BOMB!

CAN IT, FIDO -- I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM FLEA-BITTEN COMMIE RATS LIKE YOU!

IN THIS LITTLE BOX I HOLD POWER! AND EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T USE IT THE WAY I PLANNED -- I WILL USE IT!

BESIDES -- THERE ARE NO INNOCENTS! WE ARE ALL GUILTY OF LETTING AMERICA SLIDE FROM GREATNESS INTO THE MUCK OF MEDIOCRITY-- ALLOWING OUR PERFECT NATION TO BECOME A HAVEN FOR UNWHOLESOME ALIENS LIKE YOU!

THE COMMITTEE TO REBUILD AMERICAN PATRIOTISM WOULD HAVE CHANGED ALL THAT-- WE WOULD HAVE BEGUN A NUCLEAR TIDAL WAVE WHICH WOULD HAVE SWEPT THIS COUNTRY-- THE WORLD -- CLEAN!

MASTER SPLINTER, HE'S OVER THE EDGE!

WHY MUST OTHERS DIE FOR YOUR "STATEMENT," SKONK? CAN YOU NOT THINK OF A LESS LETHAL MANNER OF COMMUNICATION?!

NO! NOBODY NOTICES-- UNLESS THERE'S BLOOD!

NOBODY LISTENS -- UNLESS THERE'S PAIN!

AND NOBODY CHANGES-- UNLESS THERE'S DEATH!

33

OH, MAN-- THIS GUY IS LOONEY TUNES! WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM BEFORE--

BUT HE'S GOT THAT REMOTE DETONATOR, RAPHAEL-- CAN WE RUSH HIM IN TIME?!

I FEAR OUR OPTIONS HAVE DROPPED TO NEAR ZERO, MY SONS...!

BUT WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP! WHAT IF ONE OF US SLIPPED AROUND BACK OF--

WAIT! LOOK-- IT'S DON!

GUYS! MASTER SPLINTER!

YOU'VE GOT TO GRAB SOME COVER-- QUICKLY!

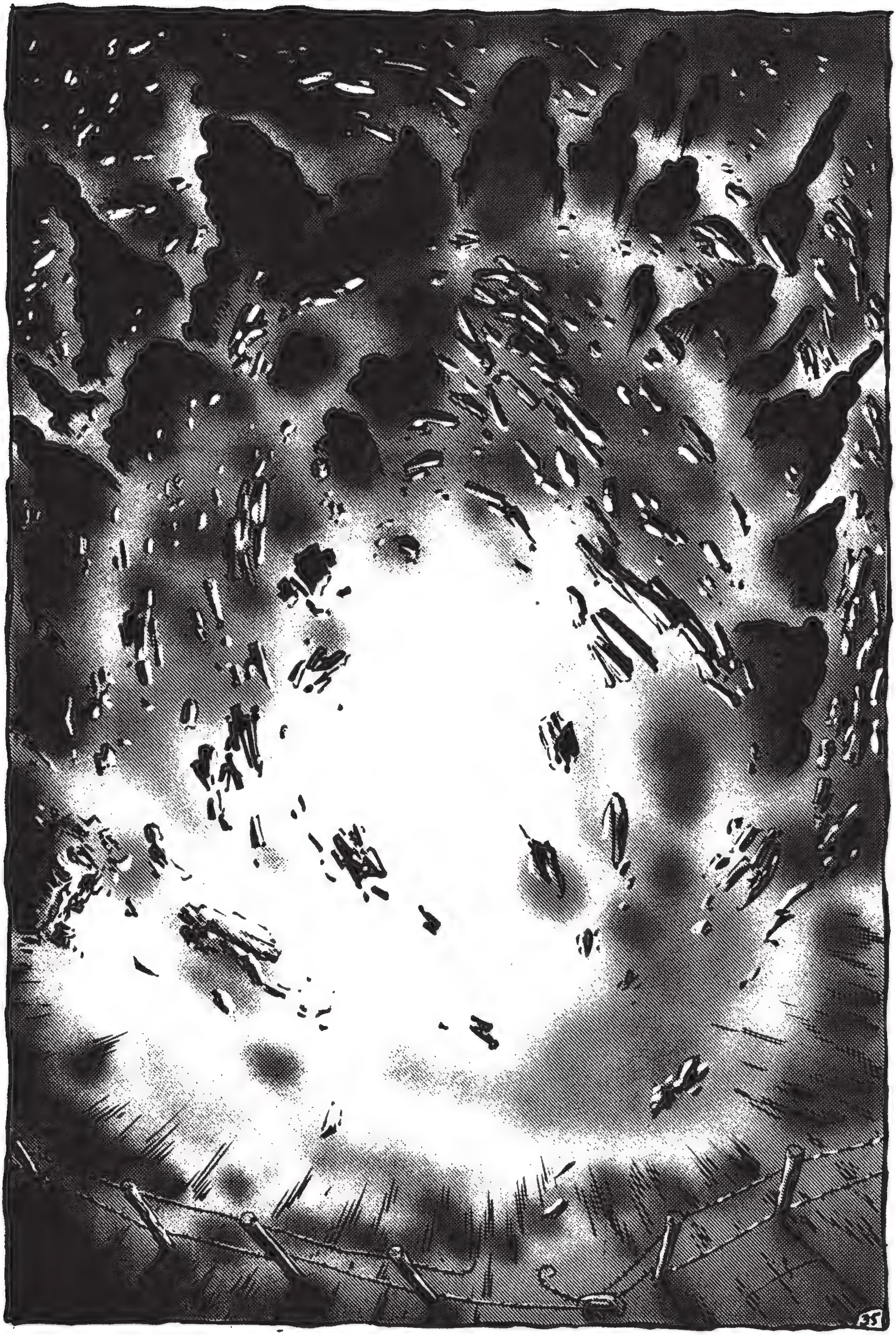
DONATELLO, ARE YOU CRAZY?! WHAT GOOD'S A TREE OR A ROCK GOING TO BE AGAINST AN ATOMIC BOMB BLAST?!

DON'T ARGUE WITH ME, LEO--

--I'VE NO TIME TO EXPLAIN! JUST HIT THE DIRT!!!

... FOR AMERICA...!

CLICK



EPILOGUE:

MICHAEL'S DOING PRETTY GOOD-- DOC AT COOLEY DICK SAYS HE'LL BE UP AND AROUND IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS!

HE'S A NICE KID... BLIND AS A BAT WITHOUT HIS GLASSES, THOUGH!

...AND A GOOD THING FOR US THAT IS!

MY ONLY REGRET IS THAT THOSE OTHER MEMBERS OF C.R.A.P. WOKE UP AND TOOK OFF BEFORE WE COULD GET BACK TO THEM!

THAT IS GOOD NEWS...

I DOUBT THEY WILL CAUSE ANY MAJOR TROUBLE, LEONARDO-- SKONK WAS THE HEART AND SOUL OF THEIR GROUP...

BY THE WAY, DONATELLO-- OUR THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR GOOD WORK UNDER PRESSURE! BY REMOVING THE PLUTONIUM CORE OF THE BOMB, YOU RENDERED IT RELATIVELY HARMLESS...

YOU SOUND SAD, DON...

I GUESS... CERTAINLY THE SHAPED EXPLOSIVE CHARGES MADE A BIG ENOUGH BANG, THOUGH FAR FROM THE INTENDED FISSION REACTION.

SHOULDN'T I BE, APRIL? A MAN DIED YESTERDAY-- A SICK, DELUDED, MISGUIDED MAN, YES-- BUT STILL A LIVING BEING.

I COULD NEVER AGREE WITH HIS LOGIC OR METHODS...

...BUT I CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH HIS MOST BASIC AIM!

AFTER ALL, IN THIS WORLD PLAGUED BY TERRORISM AND POISED ON THE BRINK OF NUCLEAR ARMAGEDDON...

...WHO DOESN'T WANT TO SURVIVE?

THE END

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

After Peter and I had completed what I look fondly back on as the "Original Series," issue #12 was the first solo story, an all-Peter Laird one. I believe I brought up this idea as we were working through the final parts of books #10 and #11. I thought that if we worked on separate issues with different artists, it would be not just creatively fun, but good strategy. Maybe if he was working on an issue while I was working on an issue, we wouldn't be so far behind schedule…

We had been growing the studio for a while at this point, bringing in guys like Michael Dooney, Jim Lawson and Ryan Brown. They'd been doing other books for us (*Gizmo*, *Bade Biker*, and *Rockola*, respectively) as publishing projects at Mirage Studios and were also doing short *TMNT* stories—ones that either (or both) Peter and I would write, pencil or ink in combination with one of the guys. It was a good, fun way to stretch a little—and always interesting to see what other artists see in your writing, how they affect the kind of story you're trying to tell. It's organic and cool, mostly.

I honestly don't think Peter and I even really spoke too much about the kinds of stories we were going to do. I was working on #13—which ended up being #14—and it felt a little like two different Beatles working on their first solo albums. I feel like we were curious to see what the other would do, and at the same time surprise the other when the originals were laid down before press time.

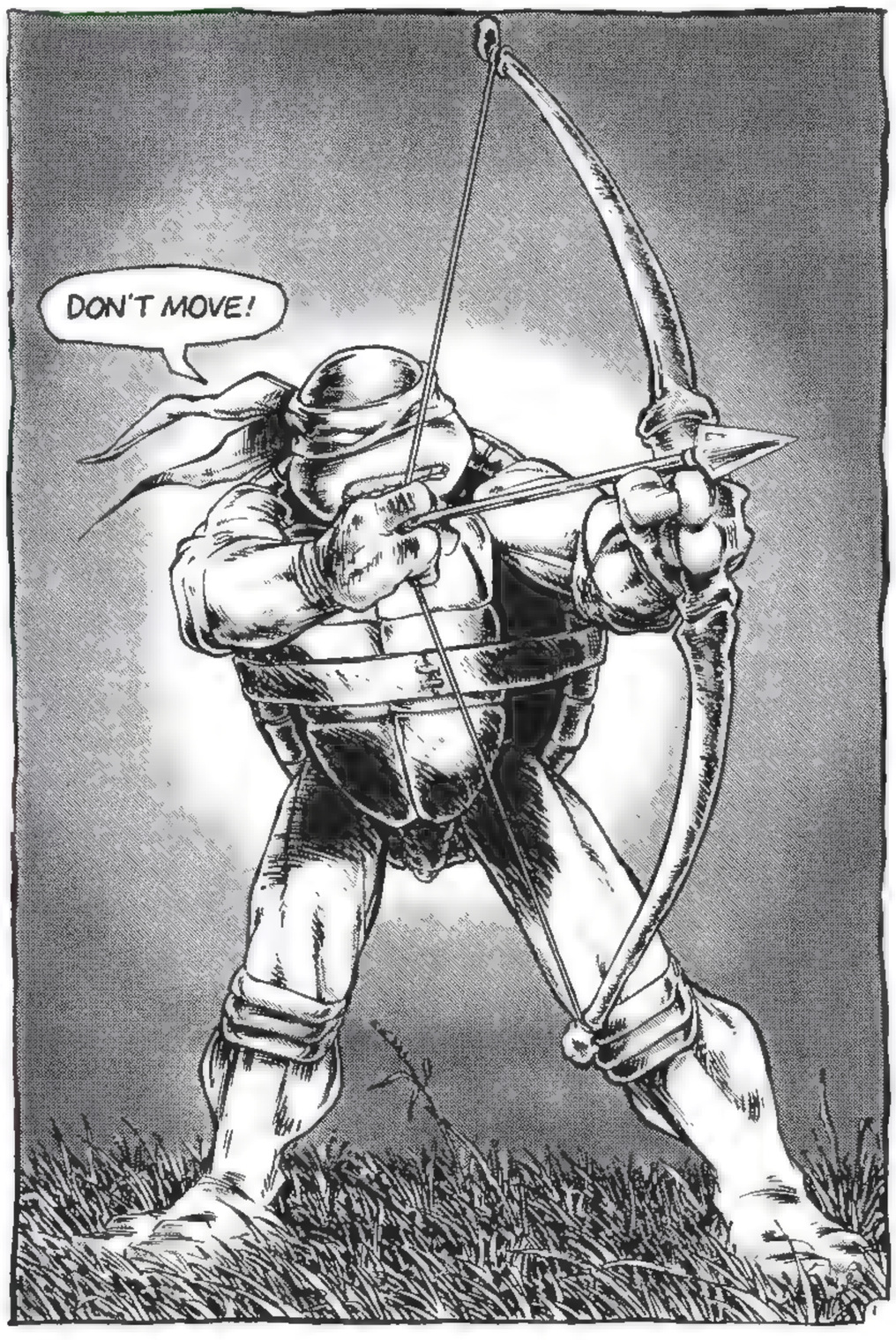
I thought book #12 was an awesome showcase for Peter's work—he played to all his strengths. It had both a very classic layout style and the insane detail he always brought to the game. It was a top-shelf *TMNT* story, with all those winks to our mutual hero Jack Kirby, and a real page-turner.

PETER LAIRD

It is weird to look at the date on the indicia of this issue—October 1987—and realize it's been a quarter of a century since I wrote and drew this book. As the "Turtle Tracks" editorial states, Kevin and I had decided it was "time for a break." As so often happens in these kinds of situations, we were trying to put a good face on it for public consumption, but the real truth of the matter was more unpleasant—we were, to a great degree, really sick of each other at that point, and it was pretty much necessary to do this, as I don't think it would have been possible for us to work together on any issues of the *TMNT* comic book right then.

I think I inked this entire issue with brushes. I look at it now and see a lot of things I would do differently, but for that time, I guess it looks okay. There are some faces I cringe at, and some of the leaves look far too regular (and every tree and bush seems to have the same kind!)… but I still like it.

Or at least most of it.



ANNOTATIONS

Page 1: I'm a big fan of the "Robin Hood" stories, so drawing Donatello with a bow here was fun. Actually, I always liked it when we showed any of the Turtles displaying prowess with weapons other than the ones they usually carried.

Looking at the "fade" I did with the Duo-Shade tones in the background, I'm pretty sure I must have masked off the figure of Don and the grass he's standing on with frisket and applied the Duo-Shade chemicals with an airbrush. I remember that this was a pretty stinky process, especially with the chemical that produced the dark tone—phew! I wonder if there were any health risks from breathing that stuff? Too late to worry now, I guess.

Pages 2– 3: I wish we had done more of these types of scenes of our main characters just hanging out, enjoying the simple pleasures of life—here, a picnic in the woods.

In the bottom panel on page 3, I have April wearing a "Roches" t-shirt—at that time, the Roches, a pop/folk-singing trio of sisters, were one of my favorite groups. If iPods had existed back when we did this issue, they would certainly have been on mine!

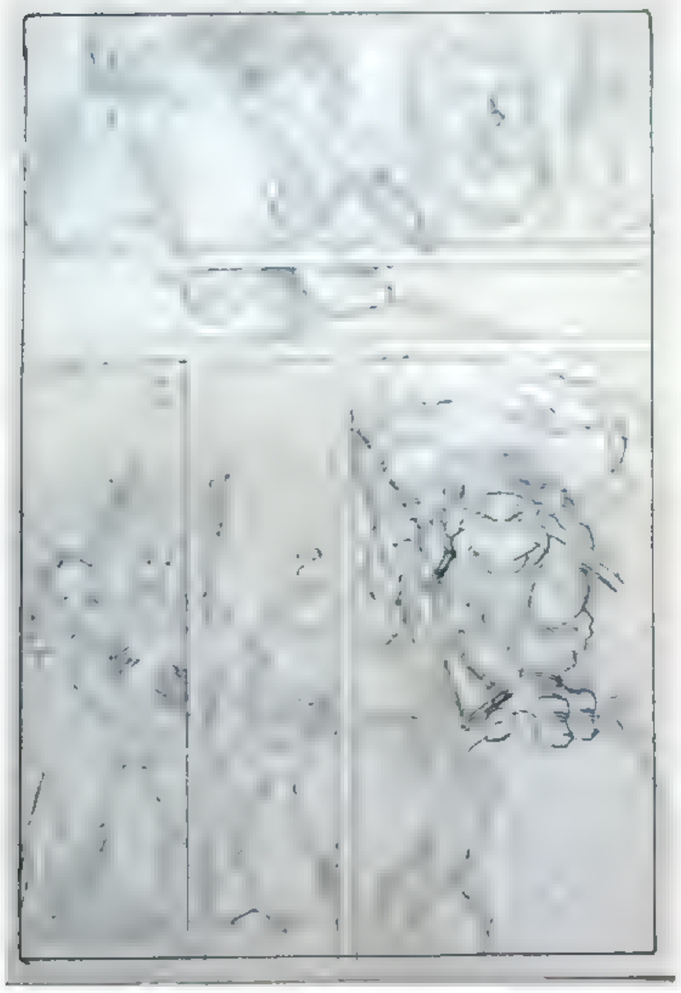
Page 7: The young man who has interrupted the picnic identifies himself as a UMass student named Michael Murphy—a tip of the hat to Michael Zulli and Steve Murphy, *Puma Blues* artist and writer, respectively.

Page 10: I remember having fun researching and drawing the various guns the members of "C.R.A.P" used. I like the composition of this page, for some reason.

Page 12: This little interplay between Raphael and Donatello was fun to write. I've often felt that we should have done more with teaming these two characters up, because they were so different.

I liked the idea that Don—to whom everyone would typically turn to fix whatever technical problem they were facing at the moment—might surprise the others by taking an "Are you kidding me?!" approach… one which, given the context, is actually pretty sensible.

Page 14: I like these two vertical panels… although looking at them now reminds me of how different our (mine and Kevin's) approaches to doing layouts were (and are).



Page 18: I would rarely draw any of the Turtles in an unusual position or perspective like the one seen in the last panel on this page—probably because it's a lot easier to draw them in more common poses. But for this scene, it was necessary to have Michelangelo surprise Pewk in a certain way… and having him almost upside-down and clinging to the rocks like that emphasized his ninja skills.

Well, it did to me, anyway. I think that angle works pretty well.

And fans of the movie *A Christmas Story* (a favorite around the studio) will likely recognize the inspiration for Mike's words in that last panel.

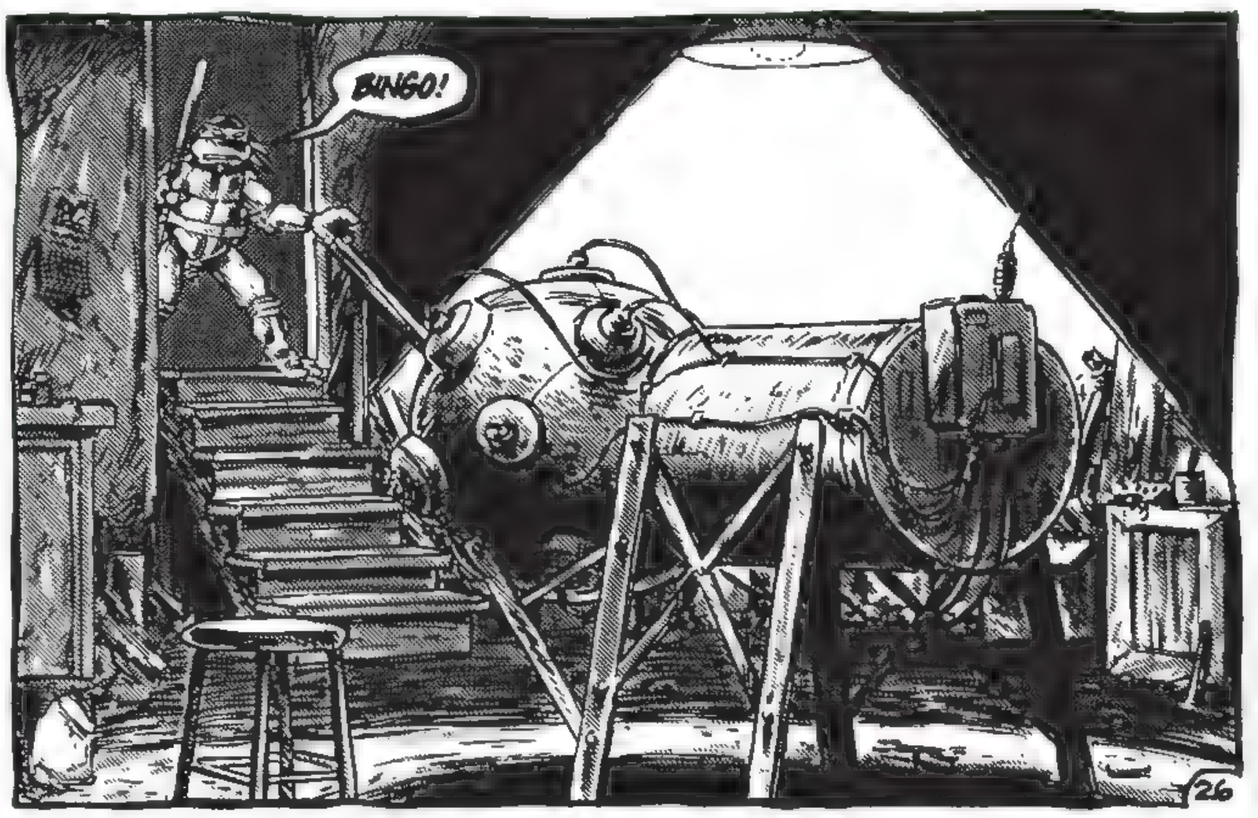
Pages 20–21: Another two-page spread—it might not be obvious, but the three two-page spreads in this issue are very much influenced by the way Jack Kirby used the form in a lot of the comics he did during his tenure at DC comics in the 1970s. This one was fun because it began a type of scene which (at least in my opinion) we didn't do often enough in the *TMNT* comics: Splinter kicking butt.

I like the body language I gave to Skonk as he reacts to the bizarre sight before him.

Page 23: Skonk's references to "puppy chow" and "Rover" in the second panel are my nod to the comments we would sometime get about Splinter looking more like a dog than a rat, at least in the way Kevin and I drew him. I suppose there's some truth to that observation. But… hell, he's a *mutant*, right?

Page 24: I kind of wish I'd done this sequence a little differently, so as to explain why (a) Skonk doesn't press his attack against Splinter, and (b) why Splinter doesn't go after Skonk.

Page 26: For the design of the home-brew nuclear weapon in the bottom panel, I drew on my memories of illustrating, in the early 1980s, a book called *The Technician* by a Northampton writer named Mike Kirby (no relation to Jack, as far as I know).



ANNOTATIONS

Pages 27–29: This is another example of a type of scene I wish we'd done more of—the Turtles taking advantage of their naturally water-friendly nature. I like the fact that Bubba and Spuds are completely oblivious to the fact that they are keeping their feet dry by stepping on giant turtle shells.

I think the two-page spread on pages 28 and 29 is my favorite of the three in this issue.

Page 31: If Splinter had not arrived on the scene at that moment, would Raphael have drowned Bubba? Hmmm…

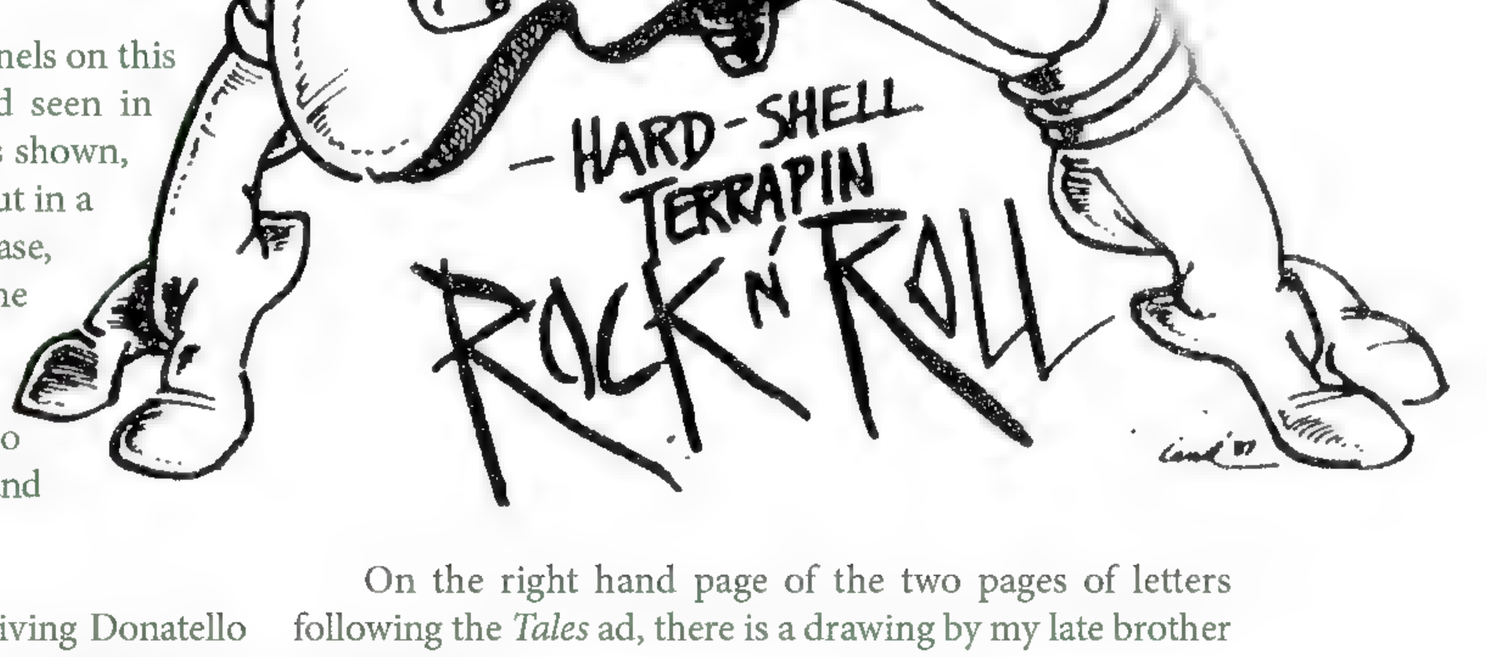
Page 33: Skonk lets loose with another dog reference ("Fido") when responding to Splinter. His spiel in the center panel was very likely inspired by some right-wing lunacy current when I did this issue—at this point in time, I can't recall what that was. Possibly, it was something to do with Ronald Reagan and his cronies.

Page 34: I like the way I did the last two panels on this page—it's obviously inspired by things I'd seen in movies where a small but decisive action is shown, not as you would expect it—in close-up—but in a long shot with a subtle sound effect (in this case, a small "CLICK" as Skonk presses the detonator button).

Page 35: I love the way Russ Heath used to draw explosions in the war comics he drew, and this one is inspired by that stylization.

Page 36: I have to confess, I always liked giving Donatello the chance to show off his thoughtful nature, as he does here on this "Epilogue" page.

Additionally: Although they're not part of the story, I have to mention three drawings of note on the next few pages. Immediately following the last page of the story, there is an ad for the next issue of *Tales of the TMNT*, with an illustration penciled by me and beautifully inked by the "Super Adaptoid," Ryan Brown.



On the right hand page of the two pages of letters following the *Tales* ad, there is a drawing by my late brother Don Laird, Jr.

HEY! LEMEE CLUE YA IN...
TRICK OR TREATS ARE O.K., BUT IF YOU REALLY CRAVE BIG FUN ON HALLOWEEN NIGHT YOU'LL READ
TALES OF THE TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
ITS FRIGHTENING. YEAH.
ON SALE OCT. 30
LAIRD BROWN

And the last interior page of the book has one of Jim Lawson's incredible vehicle drawings, this one of a van in wild motion, illustrating an ad for the Mirage Studios' trip to the 1987 Mid-Ohio Comic Con.

EASTMAN AND LAIRD'S

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES®

UNMENTIONABLES

NO. 14
$1.50
$2.25 IN CANADA
FEB 1988

#14

NORTHAMPTON

HOTEL NORTHAMPTON

A TOWN JUST LIKE THE TOWN OUTSIDE OF YOUR TOWN.

QUAINT LITTLE BURG, AND A DARN NICE PLACE TO VISIT.

A LITTLE TOO QUIET FOR MY LIKING, THOUGH.

I MISS THE BIG TOWN. THE APPLE, GREATEST CITY IN THE WORLD, NEW YORK, NEW YORK!

I NEED NOISE.

FOR NOW I'LL MAKE DUE. I CAN ADAPT, RELATE -- THE CONCRETE AND STEEL ARE OLD FRIENDS.

SOMETHING'S WRONG--

I CAN ALMOST FEEL THE SEED OF EVIL BEGIN TO SWELL AND STRETCH...

...LOOKING, SNIFFING THE CLEAR COLD AIR, SEARCHING, REACHING FOR ITS UNSUSPECTING PREY.

THE UNMENTIONABLES

A TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES ADVENTURE

EASTMAN • EC TALBOT • LAVIGNE

WE WHO SENSE THIS MUST ONLY WAIT, EVER WATCHFUL...

... FOR A SIGN

ONLY THE DEED ITSELF KNOWS WHERE AND WHEN.

I HATE THE WAITING PART.

FLICK

I GOTTA MOVE, HIT THE MAIN DRAG, THE STRIP, WHERE ALL THE CATS HANG OUT...

...WELL IF THERE WERE CATS HANGING OUT, THIS WOULD BE THE PLACE.

UPTOWN.

GUILD ART

YOUR BASIC ALL AMERICAN MAIN STREET, BETTER THAN MOST. HISTORIC BUILDINGS, GREAT RESTURANTS, GROOVY LITTLE SHOPS, A COLLEGE TOWN.

I LIKE IT.

I'D FORGOTTEN HOW WELL LIT, TOO--BETTER TURN UP HERE, STICK TO THE BACK STREETS, LOW PROFILE.

CENTRE ST.

I KNOW THIS STREET, COUSIN SID AND I PLAYED HERE AS KIDS!

OL' CENTRE STREET-- WE USED TO CALL IT THE WIND TUNNEL. NO MATTER WHAT TIME OF YEAR, THAT COLD NORTH WIND WOULD RIP THROUGH THE VALLEY, FUNNELING INTO THE CITY ON THESE VERY SIDEWALKS, CHILL YOU TO THE BONE.

DE MERSKI REALTY
ASK FOR FRAN

HMM, LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE'S WORKING LATE-- OR PLAYING HACKY-SAC, WHO KNOWS? IT'S LIKE THAT HERE.

A LITTLE STRANGE.

MIRAGE STUDIOS

SID AND I SNUCK INTO TOWN AS OFTEN AS WE COULD BACK THEN, SHEESH, WHAT A COUPLE OF ZIPHEADS WE WERE!

SID STILL IS.

HERE'S OL' LOUIE'S VARIETY--

LOUIE'S VARIETY

SID GOT CAUGHT SWIPIN' CANDY BARS ONE TIME. HAH, DIDN'T OL' LOU SCREAM THAT DAY!

MOST TIMES WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY. WE'D JUST COME TO LOOK AT THE...

HOLY MOLY--

3

..IT'S GONE!!

LOUIE'S VARIETY

SHORTLY...

LOUIS MARKET

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS, I CAN'T: CHOKE! MY BEAUTIFUL BRASS COW... GONE! WHO WOULD DO THIS? I BUY THAT COW WHEN I FIRST OPEN, BACK IN--

- JUST THE FACTS LOU!

ANY ENEMIES, LOU--? COMPETITORS MAYBE, SUPPORT GROUP, OR CRAZED FAMILY MEMBER? ANYONE WITH A MOTIVE?

I DON'T THINK SO...

PARDON ME, SON!

HEY--!

WELL MISTER AUDET, LOOKS LIKE WE GOT YOUR TYPICAL COLLEGE FRATERNITY, "LETS SWIPE THE BIG COW" PRANK.

WE'LL DO SOME CHECKING AROUND, IT'LL TURN UP.

HUH-- THAT'S IT?

NOW WAIT A MINUTE HERE-- THIS IS A **SERIOUS CASE!**

TAP TAP

YES, AND IT'S ALSO A POLICE CASE, PAL! BUTT OUT--**PRONTO!**

UUUUPH!

FINE, BE THAT WAY--! WELL, MAYBE I'LL JUST DO A LITTLE CHECKING AROUND MYSELF-- DON'T WORRY, LOU, I'LL FIND YOUR COW!

WHO WAS THAT?

I DON'T KNOW.

THAT MORNING

WHERE THE HECK CAN CASEY BE--? HE WAS OUT ALL NIGHT.

YEAH, IT'S PRETTY CRUMMY OUTSIDE, TOO!

I'M LATE, I'M LATE-- WHERE'S CASEY?!

BOMP

IF HE DOESN'T SHOW UP IN ONE SECOND, I'M STUCK DRIVING THAT TRUCK TO WORK!!

OUCH.

GRRRR-- I HATE THAT PIECE OF JUNK, THE **HEATER DOESN'T EVEN WORK!!** IT PROBABLY WON'T START, I'LL BE LATE, GET FIRED, WE'LL STARVE-- WHERE IS THAT BONE HEAD?!

CLICK

YAAA--CASEY!!

WOO!

THE COW...

I SPENT THE NIGHT LOOKING FOR THE GREAT... COW...

OH, NO-- HIS BRAIN FROZE UP. HE'S BABBLING NONSENSE!!

ZOINKS!

GAH!

WOO!

SEE, SEE-- NO MUSCLE CONTROL!

FAWUMP

GAH!

CASEY-- MY GOODNESS, ARE YOU OK?!

WAUGH--? WHEW, YEAH, I'M OK -- MY FACE HURTS A LITTLE, THOUGH.

CAR DIED 'BOUT TWO MILES BACK. I HAD TO HOOF IT HERE -- HEY, YOU GOTTA HEAR ABOUT THE GREAT COW. IT WAS STOLEN!!

OH BROTHER--! SORRY CASEY. GOTTA GO. WORK CALLS-- THAT TRUCK BETTER START!

HMM...

HMM...

HMM...

AND YOU HAD THE LUCKY BURGER, GREAT, ALL SET GUYS?

YUP!

SET.

SURE THING, MISSY-- HEY, ANYONE EVER TELL YOU WHAT A CUTIE YOU ARE?

BLUE BONNET

DINER

ALL THE TIME, FELLA-- SEE YA!

CHECKS, CHECKS, CHECKS, WHO NEEDS WHAT HERE--?

WHAT IS IT? I TOLD YOU WE MUSTN'T BE SEEN TOGETHER, TOO RISKY!

LADIES

TELL YOUR BOSS WE HAVE THE COW!

SHHH-- YOU FOOL!!

FAWAP

IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION, LEAVE IT AT THE FRONT DESK OF THE HOTEL NORTH-AMPTON, ROOM 213--

--GOODBYE!

OUCH.

7

COW, COW, COW -- WHERE ELSE HAVE I HEARD ABOUT A COW TODAY?

THINK, THINK, THINK...

...WOO!

ONLY HAMPSHIRE OPEN!

STOLEN COWS?!

TURTLE TOYS AT 20

I WONDER, -- OH WOW!!

APRIL

AWW--THE COPS WILL FIND IT, IT PROBABLY IS SOME KIND OF COLLEGE PRANK, WHO ELSE WOULD STEAL A HUGE METAL COW?!

BRASS-- IT'S A BRASS COW!

AND THAT'S JUST THE KIND OF DEFEATIST ATTITUDE THIS CASE DOESN'T NEED-- THIS IS SERIOUS!

RIIIING

OH BROTHER--!

YOU ASKED FOR IT, ZIPHEAD!

RIIIING

HELLO--

OH, HI, APRIL.

8

WELL NOW. THAT'S A FINE HOW DO YOU DO! WHAT'S GOING ON?

SORRY, APRIL. IT'S THIS COW THING, YA KNOW...?

WELL, THIS SHOULD MAKE YOUR DAY THEN-- I OVER HEARD THESE TWO GUYS TALKING, RIGHT, AND WHEN ONE MENTIONED A **COW**, THE OTHER SHUT HIM UP REAL QUICK LIKE!

YES-- I'M SURE HE SAID **COW**!

WHAT'S THIS--?

SOMEONE OVER-HEARD -- THIS COULD BE **REAL** TROUBLE!

A CLUE--?! A CLUE!! THIS IS GREAT! HOTEL NOHO, HUH?!

213, GOT IT, I'M THERE, APRIL. THANKS!

AW. THE BUM-- I WANTED TO GO, TOO!

SLAM

APRIL

AHEM--! PARDON ME, TOOTS-- AH, MA'DAM...

EXCUSE ME?!

MAY I HELP YOU?!

YEAH, I WORK FOR CHET'S NOTE DELIVERY SERVICE, AND I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE PERSON IN ROOM 213--

--OH WHAT'S HIS NAME?!

THAT'S PRIVATE INFORMATION!

I SEE... WELL, IT'S LIKE THIS, I NEED TO KNOW THE PERSON'S NAME SO I'M SURE I'M DOING MY JOB PROPERLY.

YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO LOSE MY JOB WOULD YOU? COME ON-- WHAT'S HIS NAME?!

NOTHING DOING-- LEAVE THE NOTE WITH ME AND I'LL SEE THAT IT IS DELIVERED CORRECTLY.

AW LADY-- GET A LIFE! COME ON, WHO IS IT?!

SECURITY!!

RATS--FOILED IN THE FIRST INNING! THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY.

10

HEY CASEY!

GAHH--!!

APRIL--GEEZ, SCARE THE LIFE OUT OF SOMEONE!!

SORRY--HEE, HEE--I JUST GOT OFF WORK AND CAME BY TO SEE IF YOU FOUND ANYTHING OUT.

ZIP! NOT A THING. THEY PRACTICALLY--WELL, ACTUALLY DID, THROW ME OUT!

REALLY? WOW, WHAT DID YOU DO... AH, NEVER MIND.

BETTER YET, WHY DON'T YOU LET ME TRY.

DUM DEE DUM DEE DUM DEE DO

I MEAN, THESE GUYS WERE TERRIBLE--SO I GOT BACK TO "SOUNDS ALIVE" AND DEMANDED A REPLACEMENT ORCHESTRA!

VERY GOOD.

OOP!

AFTER ALL, YOUR DAUGHTER ONLY GRADUATES FROM SMITH COLLEGE ONCE!

THAT'S RIGHT, HOWARD, AND SHE'S MY BABY--I WANT THIS NIGHT TO BE SPECIAL!

NO PROBLEM, I'VE GOT IT ALL WORKED OUT--GUEST DINNER AT EIGHT, YOUR TOAST, THEN WE'LL MOVE INTO THE GRAND BALLROOM AT TEN, FOR DANCING AND FUN.

THIS IS PERFECT!

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, HOWARD. WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?

THAT NIGHT

HOTEL HAMPTON PARKING ONLY (WILL BE TOWED)

THIS IS STUPID! WE HAVE NO REAL EVIDENCE, BUT YOU GUYS ARE CRASHING A PARTY, AND WE'RE SUPPOSE TO RANSACK ROOM 213!

SEARCH, RAPH, SEARCH!

IT'S BREAKING AND ENTERING, YA KNOW!

AW COME ON-- SHOW SOME SPUNK, WILL YA!

LOOK, JUST DO A LITTLE POKING AROUND, SEE IF YOU CAN FIND A LINK BETWEEN THE TEXAN AND THE COW. THAT'S ALL WE'RE GOING TO DO--!

YEAH, WE'RE JUST GOING TO HANG OUT A LITTLE AND LISTEN IN A LOT! YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT MIGHT TURN UP.

OH ALL RIGHT--! GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE.

HAVE I TOLD YOU HOW RAVISHING YOU LOOK TONIGHT?

OH, CASEY, THAT'S SWEET.

AFTER YOU MISS!

SUCH A GENTLEMAN-- GIGGLE!

HERE GOES NOTHING-- JUST ACT NATURAL.

OH SURE.

WHEE, THIS IS GREAT!

SHHH, PIPE DOWN-- YOU WANT TO ALERT THE WHOLE HOTEL?!

I COUNTED AS MANY ROOMS FROM THE STAIRWAY AS I COULD, IF MY GUESS IS CORRECT, THIS SHOULD BE IT.

LOOKS EMPTY, LET'S CHECK IT OUT.

ANYBODY HOME?

SPREAD OUT, LET'S GIVE THIS PLACE THE ONCE OVER.

I WANT THE CLOSET!

BINGO -- GOT SOMETHING HERE!

A FILE OF SOME SORT-- CHECK IT OUT!

THE COW, THE STORE, THE TEXAN, AND THAT HOWARD GUY, JUST LIKE APRIL DESCRIBED! IT'S ALL HERE AND THEN SOME-- OL' CASEY'S GOT A LIVE ONE HERE!

WAIT A MINUTE, FELLAS. THE PHONE SAYS, ROOM 215 -- WE GOT THE WRONG ROOM!

BELOW

GACK, WHAT A BUNCH OF STUFFED SHIRTS-- I HAVEN'T HEARD A THING ABOUT THE COW!

OH, WHERE DID THAT CASEY GET OFF TO NOW-- UT OH!

THE TEXAN'S BODYGUARD, HOWARD-- HE'S SEEN ME!

DUNG, DUNG, DUNG-- HE'S COMING OVER.

I'VE GOTTA THINK QUICK!

I'LL DASH OUT THIS SIDE EXIT!

THIS IS GOOD-- NOW TO HIDE!

HE'S COMING-- I'LL TRY THIS DOOR, PLEASE OPEN!

EEEK!

SLAM

UM... HOWDY, MA'AM! I'M MIKAL. THIS IS MY BROTHER LUKA, AND MY OTHER BROTHER LUKA. WE'RE THE SMENGIE BROTHERS.

PLEASE, I NEED YOUR HELP--THERE'S A MAN FOLLOWING ME, I THINK HE'S A CROOK!

IF YOU GUYS CAN LIKE--GRAB AND HOLD HIM, I'LL GET THE POLICE AND--

ALL RIGHT YOU--HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

HEY--WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

A LITTLE PROBLEM--

I'LL HANDLE IT!

HEY WAIT A--

I'LL DEAL WITH YOU LATER, MISS!

THAT OUR TEN MILL' PARTNER?

I AM NOT YOUR PARTNER--AND WATCH YOUR MOUTH, SHE'S HEARD ENOUGH ALREADY! THE TERMS REMAIN THE--

HOWARD!

OH, YEAH. HALF NOW AND--

HERE! TAKE HER ALSO, I'LL DEAL WITH HER PERSONALLY--LATER!

DO NOT HARM HER--GOT ME?!

COST YA EXTRA--!

COVERED--BUT I'M WARNING YOU--

I DON'T LIKE THIS HOWARD, NO LOOSE ENDS.

I KNOW.

THE ADDRESS.

SEE YOU IN THE MORNING!

LEAVE THROUGH THE BACK.

UPSTAIRS

COME ON GUYS. LET'S GO WAIT FOR CASEY AND APRIL -- THIS WHOLE THING IS MORE INVOLVED THAN WE KNOW. I THINK IT SHOULD BE HANDED OVER TO THE COPS!

HOLY COW!!

THAT'S APRIL -- THOSE MEN ARE FORCING HER INTO THAT VAN!

LET'S GO!

THEY'RE MOVING TOO FAST--!

GO, LEO, GO!

SPANG

GRAHHA--DAMN!

VERROOMMM

THIS IS AWFUL!

WHERE THE HECK IS CASEY?!!

COME ON -- WE CAN'T LOSE THEM. WE'LL FOLLOW IN THE TRUCK!

16

THERE--TURNING RIGHT AT THE LIGHTS, THAT'S THEM!

SSKIDD

RRROOMM

PERFECT--NOW, STAY CLOSE, BUT NOT TOO CLOSE, KEEP BACK, AND KEEP DOWN, IF WE'RE SPOTTED--

OKAY, OKAY, GEEZ--! I WATCH TV TOO, YA KNOW!

BACK AT THE HOTEL

SOMETHING IS GOING ON HERE--I HAVEN'T SEEN APRIL FOR A WHILE NOW!

MEN

I NEED A MINUTE TO THINK THIS THROUGH.

MEN

BY THE WAY, I GOT THE LOW-DOWN ON THE HADLEY COUNTY FAIR PRIZE WINNER, AND WHERE TO PLACE YOUR BETS!

NO KIDDING?

SOMEONE'S COMING!

SO WHO'S GOT THE AH ! SNICKER ! PRIZE COW, ANYWAY?

COW-?! HE SAID COW!

A GUY NAMED NORMAN WHITTY. HE'S GOT A SPREAD OUT ON ROUTE 116. IT'S A SURE THING, SO KEEP IT HUSH, HUSH!

SOUNDS GREAT TO ME, I'M IN.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT--THIS IS SO GREAT!

HOW DO YOU GET THIS STUFF?

CONNECTIONS, MY MAN, CONNECTIONS!

OH BOY, OH BOY, OH BOY!

LOBBY

BALLROOM

I'LL ZIP OUT IN THE TRUCK AND RETURN A HERO BEFORE THE PARTY'S OVER!

HOTEL NORTHAMPTON

AWW NO-- THE TRUCK'S GONE! THE GUYS MUST'VE GOT BORED AND WENT HOME--THE BUMS!!

HOW AM I GONNA- AHHAH!

TAXI!

THIS IS IT, DUDES -- THERE'S THE VAN BY THAT SHED!

I THINK THIS DEAL IS SCREWY. WHY SHOULD WE HAVE TO WATCH HER? WE DO ALL THE DIRTY WORK!

AH, WHAT THE HECK -- IT'S WORTH A COUPLE THOU EXTRA, BIG DEAL.

MUMPHA RUKA, WHAF UF GRUFFHT LOFFA!

HEY, LET'S UNGAG HER -- SEE WHAT SHE KNOWS!

HHHEEELLLPPP!

APRIL!

YOU PINHEADS ARE IN BIG TROUBLE-- OH, YOU WAIT! I'VE GOT FRIENDS, YOU KNOW!

THEY'RE PROBABLY OUTSIDE RIGHT NOW JUST WAITING TO BUST IN AND KICK YOUR UGLY BUTTS-- GRRAHH!!

GOPES-- WHY DOESN'T SHE JUST POINT US OUT!

UM, I THINK SHE JUST DID!

WELL, LET'S NOT DISAPPOINT ANYONE-- LET'S GO!

SMASH

GAH!

SEE, I TOLD YOU!

GRRAHH!

HAI!

CHUNK

FAWUMP

THUDD

BONK

WIMPS!

SHORTLY

WELL, WELL, WELL, WHAT HAVE WE GOT HERE, COW THIEVES HUH?!

YEAH, THEY WERE IN SOME OF THE PHOTOS AT THE HOTEL!

(DEMONS, BEASTS, HELP, HELP!)*

WHAT KIND OF LINGO IS THAT?!

(SHUT UP, MIKAL, SAY NOTHING!)

SOUNDS EUROPEAN-- OK DUDES, COME CLEAN, IN ENGLISH. I WANT SOME ANSWERS NOW!

(SAY NOTHING--! THIS IS JUST SOME KIND OF TRICK!)

(WE'VE GOT TOO MUCH AT STAKE-- REMEMBER OUR CAUSE!)

(W-WHAT SHOULD WE D-DO?)

YOU'RE STRESSING ME, BUD-- START TALKING!!!

GRRRR.

YAAAA--! I'LL TALK, I'LL TALK-- GET AWAY!

THE COW... IT IS OURS, LOUIS IS OUR BROTHER. WE ALL FLED SLAVAKIA BEFORE THE REVOLUTION. THE AH... BRASS COW BELONGED TO OUR FAMILY, WE BROUGHT IT HERE AND NOW WE WISH TO RETURN.

MISTER CUDWORTH IS A BIG ANTIQUE COW COLLECTOR. SO WE WERE GOING TO SELL THE RELIC TO HIM ALLOWING US THE MONEY TO RETURN. OUR PIG BROTHER LOUIE WOULD NOT GIVE US THE COW TO SELL. SO WE STOLE IT BACK!

THAT'S IT... EVERYTHING.

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE. SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT HERE! YOU SHOULD HEAR THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THEY'RE GETTING FOR THIS SO CALLED **BRASS COW-- MILLIONS**. TEN, I THINK!

NO KIDDING?!

SOMEONE'S HOLDING OUT!

* TRANSLATED FROM SLAVAKIAN.

THAT'S IT -- I'M TICKED OFF!! I WANT THE REAL STORY, OR WE'LL BASH THAT COW TO BITS!! GRAHHH!

IT'S GOLD!! IT'S MADE OF SOLID GOLD, WE STOLE IT DURING THE TAKE OVER TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE! THE DICTATOR HAS BEEN OVER THROWN SO WE CAN RETURN --

-- WE WANT THE PEOPLE TO SHARE THE MONEY!

THIS IS INCREDIBLE!!

IS THIS FOR REAL?

WOW, SOLID GOLD!!

THIS WHOLE DEAL SMELLS A LITTLE FUNNY -- I STILL DON'T THINK WE HAVE THE WHOLE STORY!

IF WE TURN THIS OVER TO THE POLICE NOW, WE STILL MIGHT LOSE THE TEXANS CONNECTION. BESIDES, I'VE GOT TO SEE HOW THIS THING TURNS OUT!

HEY, I'VE GOT A CAMERA IN MY BAG I LEFT IN THE TRUCK!

WE GOT AN OLD REEL TO REEL OVER HERE, I BET I CAN GET IT TO WORK!

PERFECT -- I'VE GOT A GREAT PLAN!

WHERE'S THE PHONE?

22

PARDON ME, MISTER CUDWORTH, YOU HAVE AN URGENT PHONE CALL.

URGENT?

YES, SIR.

HELLO?

GOOD EVENING, LISTEN CAREFULLY...

THE DEAL GOES DOWN TONIGHT, NOW-- WE WANT AN ADDITIONAL FIVE MILLION OR WE GO STRAIGHT TO THE COPS.

I SEE.

MM

CLICK!

HOWARD, GET THE BOYS AND FOLLOW ME-- WE HAVE A "SMALL" PROBLEM.

WHAT?

COME ON, GUYS.

SHORTLY

MEANWHILE

THERE-- I THINK THAT'S THE ONE!

TAXI

KILL THE LIGHTS AND PULL INTO THE DRIVEWAY--!

ARE YOU NUTS?!

NAH. JUST HYPER--

--COME ON, JUST DO IT. I'M... AH, SURPRIZING SOMEONE!

WAIT HERE, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

YEAH, SURE.

HE DIDN'T EVEN SHUT THE DOOR!

I'M GONNA BE A HERO! HA, HA, HA!

THE BARN. I BET IT'S HIDDEN IN THERE-- WHERE ELSE, RIGHT?!

REETTTIT

THIS IS GOING TO BE SO GREAT!

LIGHTS? OH EXCELLENT!

CLICK

GAHHH!

IT'S ALIVE?!!

SNORT

CASEY, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE THIS TIME?!

HEY YOU--!! WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON HERE?!! GET AWAY FROM THAT CRITTER-- IT'S A PRIZE WINNER, YA KNOW!

BEG PARDON, SIR-- I'M FROM... FARM LIFE NEWS WEEK REPORT! JUST TRYING TO GET A SCOOP!

GOTTA GO-- BYE NOW!

QUICK, BACK TO THE HOTEL-- STEP ON IT!!

HOLD ON, LOONEY, I WANT SOME GREEN BACKS FIRST-- PAY UP!

OKAY, OKAY, LOOK-- I'VE GOT MY INSTA-CARD HERE, I'LL PAY DOUBLE THE METER, IF YOU JUST HURRY!!

YOU DON'T AND I'LL BUST YOU UP, BUT GOOD! GRUMBLE

TAXI

24

SMENGIE
HAH. I WISH CASEY WAS HERE-- THIS IS GONNA BE GREAT!
EASY NOW, WE JUST WANT THEM TO FESS UP ON TAPE, THEN WE'LL HOLD THEM FOR THE POLICE -- GOT IT? THESE GUNS ARE JUST TO SCARE 'EM, I DON'T WANT ANY SHOOTING!
DON'T WORRY LEO, I UNLOADED MINE-- I HATE THESE THINGS!

THEY SHOULD BE HERE ANY MINUTE-- EVERYONE READY?
SET.
CHECK!
OY.
COVERED.
WE GOT HEADLIGHTS, DUDES -- THEY'RE HERE!
25

HOWARD.

ALL RIGHT, SMENGIES--WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL? WE HAD A DEAL HERE!

WE'VE BEEN THINKING. GOLD IS **INCREASING** IN VALUE AS WE SPEAK, SO WE FIGURE IT'S WORTH A LITTLE **MORE** THAN TEN MILLION! PAY UP!

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE--YOU'RE NOT THE **SMENGIE BROTHERS!!** WHAT'S GOING ON HERE--WHO ARE YOU?!

I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT **ENOUGH!** BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER, I WANT TO SEE A COW!

EASE DOWN, **TEX**--YOU CAN SEE THE COW, BUT THE DEAL **STANDS!** WE WANT OUR CUT, THAT'S ALL!

MIKE.

GOT IT.

UT OH--LEO, LOOK!!

HOLY--WHAT IS THAT?! A FAKE?!

WHAT KIND OF **DOUBLE CROSS** IS THIS!! WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?!

CLACK

MORE LIKE **TRIPLE** CROSS--WE THOUGHT THIS WAS THE GOLD COW!!

HOLD IT NOW -- EVERYONE JUST COOL DOWN. WE'LL GET THIS CLEARED UP!

I WANT THAT COW NOW!

HEY-- WHAT'S THAT?!

RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

VERROOOMMM

OH NO... IT CAN'T BE!

VEROOOMM VEROOMM

SCREEEEEE

SMMASHHH

THE SMENGIE BROTHERS--

RRRIIPPPP

SSHRAKKK

THEY'VE ESCAPED!!

KABASH

ROOMMM

THE COW!

HIT THE FLOOD LIGHTS!!

IT'S A GET UP-- WASTE 'EM!

BRRAPPPP!

SPAK

THUCK

CHOCK

FIND COVER!!

STOP, STOP-- CEASE FIRE! THOSE FOOLS HAVE THE COW, IT'S THEM WE WANT!

HE'S RIGHT. GET IN--! HOWARD, YOU DRIVE. WHAT A MESS!

ENOUGH ALREADY-- GET IN!!

BRAPPP

OH, SURE, BOSS!

RRRRROOMMM

28

EVERYONE OK--?! QUICKLY THEN, WE'LL FOLLOW IN THE TRUCK-- **LET'S GO!**

I'LL **DRIVE!**

NO PROBLEM!

YAHOO!

RAHHHHH

TAKE A RIGHT-- I BET THEY'RE HEADING FOR THE INTERSTATE!

SSKREEE

CAN'T THIS **HEAP** GO ANY **FASTER**?!

STUFF IT, BUCK WHEAT--

--I'M GETTING **REAL** SICK OF YOU!

HUH?!

THE COW-- GAHH!!

HEY-- **WATCH** IT!!

TAXI

NO WAIT-- STOP-- HOLD IT--

CRANK THIS SUCKER AROUND--!!

PERFECT!!

YAAAAHH!

SKKIDDD

DRIVE, MISTER-- FOLLOW THAT COW!!

OH GOD, OH GOD, OH GOD...

NOW--!!

SKEEEEE

FASTER,

FASTER,

FASTER--

GET CLOSER!

HEELPPPP!

SHUT UP AND DRIVE!

ULP!

CAR-- COMING UP FAST. WHAT'LL WE DO?!

CLOSER CLOSER CLOSER-!!

WHY ME?!

FINALLY-- NOW HOLD IT HERE OR SO HELP ME I'LL POUND YOU!

TAXI

HA, HA, HA-- YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY THIS TIME!

COWABUNGA!

?

YAHOOO--

I'VE GOT IT, I HAVE THE GREAT COW! HA.HA,HA,HAH!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT-- HE-- IT JUMPED ON TO THE COW!

MADNESS, IT'S MADNESS!

WHAT, WHO--?

YAAAA!

GRRAHHH!

UTOH--!

MISTAKE!

WHUMP

KABASH!

WHUMP

YOU PUKES ARE UNDER ARREST!!

GROAN--HELP. HELP-

32

CORRECTION-- YOU'RE ALL UNDER ARREST!

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS CHAYKIN?!

QUITE SIMPLE-- I AM A SECRET SERVICE AGENT AND YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!

REMAIN MOTIONLESS AND DROP YOUR WEAPONS!

SAME GOES FOR YOU DOWN THERE--ANYONE MOVES AND I'LL DROPEM!

YOU'RE ALL IN A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE!

COME ON IN, BOYS. SITUATION SECURE!

I DEMAND AN EXPLANATION!

LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW, MR. CUDWORTH, OR SHOULD I CALL YOU EMIL BRUZENIAK?! I'VE BEEN UNDER COVER FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, WORKING UNDER YOU-- WAITING FOR YOUR NEXT MOVE!

WHUP WHUP WHUP

HOLY MACKREL-- WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

WE'D BETTER HIGH TAIL IT, APRIL. LOOKS LIKE COPS!

I'LL PULL OVER-- I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED!

NO NEED, JUST SLOW DOWN-- WE'LL TAKE IT FROM THERE!

BE CAREFUL, GUYS!

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO, MISTER. LET'S HEAR IT--

WELL, I--

--APRIL!

CASEY!

SLAM

YOU?!

WHO ARE YOU?!

WHY SUE'S WITH ME, WE CRACKED THIS CASE TOGETHER!

YEAH!

GROAN.

YOU HAVEN'T CRACKED ANY THING- I WANT IT ALL FROM YOUR BEGINNING.

WELL, IT ALL STARTED WHEN I WAS A KID--

SOME TIME LATER...

WELL, THAT'S IT IN A NUTSHELL

YEP!

HMM, QUITE A ;YAWN: TALE.

IT ALL SEEMS TO CHECK OUT EXCEPT ONE THING--

35

WHO WERE THE... AH, PERSONS AT THE SMENGIE BROTHERS PLACE. I WANT TO QUESTION THEM.

AH, WELL, UM... YA SEE IT'S LIKE THIS... APRIL?

YEAH, THEY'RE LIKE, FRIEND'S OF OURS, THAT WOULD PREFER TO STAY OUT OF THE PICTURE, SORT OF ANONYMOUS.

LOOK -- THE CASE IS SOLVED, YOU HAVE YOUR MAN, WHY NOT JUST LET IT GO? PLEASE?!

IT WOULD MEAN A LOT TO US.

HMMM... YOU KNOW YOU FOLKS ALMOST BLEW TWO YEARS OF HARD, HARD WORK? NOT TO MENTION THE COST!

I DON'T KNOW...

I GUESS YOU DID HELP A LITTLE AT THE END THERE...

AW, WHAT THE HECK -- I'LL LET IT GO THIS TIME! WE'LL FILE IT UNDER UNMENTIONABLES.

NEXT TIME, MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

OH, SURE -- NO PROBLEM!

THANK YOU, BYE!

THATS US. HUH GUYS-- UNMENTIONABLES!

AIN'T IT THE TRUTH.

LET'S GO HOME.

END

37

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

I LOVED the *Untouchables* film, and immediately wanted to try a *TMNT* story with that kind of feel, setting, and pacing—a detective story. I started searching around my memory banks and reference files for ideas. One of the things I kept coming back to was the fact the TMNTs still, for the most part, needed to remain "behind the scenes" with the crimes they helped solve. So I thought a play on words here would work—they were kind of the "Unmentionables"!

A forced title, I think, but it worked for the kind of tale I wanted to tell, and of course my first choice of story vehicle was Casey Jones. I always imagined he spent a lot of time having his own personal adventures in his head, so it was also easy to pick him to do the film noir narration thing as the adventure starts and rolls out.

It was also fun that the entire thing was set in the Northampton, MA area, where we were living at the time. I actually walked around with a camera one day after I had done most of the layouts and photographed parts of downtown NoHo that were going to be in the story—the Hotel Northampton for example—as well as Main Street and Center Street where the Mirage Studios office was at the time.

The basis for the rest of the story is a collection of so many different little bits and influences—pretty much how I always write—and here you'll find everything from gags lifted from the *Bob Newhart Show*, *Saturday Night Live* skits, local goofy Northampton in-jokes and humor, my grandfather's old truck, a variety store called "Louie's" I worked at in High School… as well as a stolen cow from Nicely's Market. Pretty much everything is self-explanatory when you read the story, but the cow thing was/is the foundation…

Here's how it goes: There used to be a giant plastic cow on top of Nicely's Market near where I grew up in Maine, and one year some local high school's graduating class stole it and stuck it on the front lawn of a rival high school as a prank. It wasn't a really big deal, but it was Maine, and it made all the papers and local news reports—and it always struck me as funny.

So I took that cow, made it solid gold and stolen by the Smengie Brothers (Mikal, Luka, and Luka) from a foreign government during a revolution that happened many years ago, stuck it on top of a store I used to work at in Maine, added a rich Texan cow collector, an FBI agent hot on the trail of a stolen treasures case, Casey Jones trying to crack the case—and enlisting April and four "Unmentionable" TMNTs to get into a situation so that I could make them wear *Untouchables* style clothing and have one of them carry a Thompson machine gun.

See how easy it is?

I think some of my favorite parts, besides working with fellow Maine natives Eric Talbot and Steve Lavigne on the art and lettering respectively, was Casey walking around downtown Northampton at night—out in front of the Hotel Northampton, up Main Street, down Center Street and looking up at the Mirage Studios sign and making a comment. Lots of fun stuff like that in there. Casey's Jeep was kind of based on one my Grandfather Eastman used to have up at the camp in Maine, used mainly for hauling brush around the old dirt roads.

I think the acting—expressions—were very good in the issue, some of the best up to this point. And the art was very clean—the pages were larger, and the duo-shade was used in a more graphic sense, rather than just all shading. There was a lot less fighting and a lot more story here than some of the others, and if I had to pick two of my favorite pages it would be page 31 "Cowabunga!" and the final page with the TMNTs in shadow in the woods.

PETER LAIRD

This was Kevin's first solo outing on the *TMNT* book, following our decision to take a break from working together on the comics. It's a classic Kevin Eastman story… full of quirky humor, great layouts, and misspellings. (And lest people think I'm being too harsh with that last comment, let me point out that Kevin has made note of it himself.)

Actually, I just noticed on the first page that Eric Talbot is listed in the credits, so I guess it wasn't totally a solo effort—I imagine Eric helped with the inks and/or toning. But the story and pencils are all Kevin, I believe. (And, as with my first "solo" issue, Steve Lavigne did the lettering.)

I don't really have a lot to say about this issue—I had nothing to do with it, and I didn't find the zany, convoluted "caper" plot particularly interesting (still don't—it was hard reading this one again). That doesn't necessarily mean it's bad—it's just not to my taste.

And as much as I like Casey and April, having them dominate this issue (reducing the Turtles, for the first time in their own comic book, to the roles of supporting characters) was not, in my opinion, a great idea.

ANNOTATIONS

Page 1: Some fun touches are evident here, and elsewhere in this issue, with recognizable Northampton, MA landmarks. The first page has views of the jewelry store on the corner of Main and King streets, as well as the front of the Hotel Northampton.

I like the bit with the guy who flicks his cigarette in the last "panel" (not *really* a panel, as it has no borders) off to the right of the page…

Page 2: …and the butt arcs through the air through three small panels and ends up being casually re-flicked by an unusually dapper Casey Jones.

Kevin always loved that cinematic stuff.

Page 3: More bits and pieces of Northampton, as Casey turns west on Main Street, walking up past the courthouse (where Mirage artists have spent many a sunny afternoon coffee break, sitting on the courthouse steps and people-watching), with the Guild art supply store visible across the street. (The Guild store was started by one of the guys who was a founding member, along with me, of the *Scat* free comics magazine… a copy of which Kevin found back in 1980, I think, and which led him to look me up. Turtles followed a few years later.)

There are a lot of small panels on this page, and on other pages in this issue—if I am remembering correctly, this reflected the influence on Kevin of Frank Miller's *Dark Knight*.

I mentioned misspellings earlier… I just noticed one that I don't think I ever noticed before, and it appears both in the lettering *and* in the artwork. It makes me wonder if Kevin *deliberately* misspelled "Center Street" as "Centre Street" for some reason… though I can't imagine what that reason might be.

Another cute "in-joke" on this page is the panel near the bottom of the page where Casey makes note that "someone's working late… or playing hacky-sack" on the second floor of a building on Center Street… and the window has a "Mirage Studios" sign. Our first offices in Northampton were on the second floor of a building on Center Street… though I am pretty sure we never put a sign announcing our presence there in the window.

Page 4: I always liked the way this splash page was drawn, especially the snowy rooftop from which the cow statue has been purloined. And I'm not sure, but I suspect that Kevin, and not Steve, may have done the big "-- IT'S GONE!" lettering in Casey's word balloon—it has that look.

Page 6: It's nice that Kevin drew most of the Turtles hanging out with their masks off, at least. That's something that bothers me when I look back at some of the old books—very often, when the Turtles were just sitting around the lair, they'd still have their masks as well as their belts, kneepads and elbow pads on. Why? Doesn't make much sense.

And the little bit where April flings the door open and it whacks one of the Turtles in the head is funny. That kind of staging of "incidental action" always seemed to come easier to Kevin that it did to me.

Page 7: There's another Northampton landmark—the well-known Bluebonnet Diner on King Street. And that patron who is flirting with April looks suspiciously like Jim Lawson.

Page 8: I'm not sure which Turtle it is who is stretched out with his feet up on the coffee table in the fourth panel from the bottom of the page, but I love that kind of stuff where a character is posing casually—and Kevin had a knack for doing that. It's also a perspective that I probably would not have thought of.

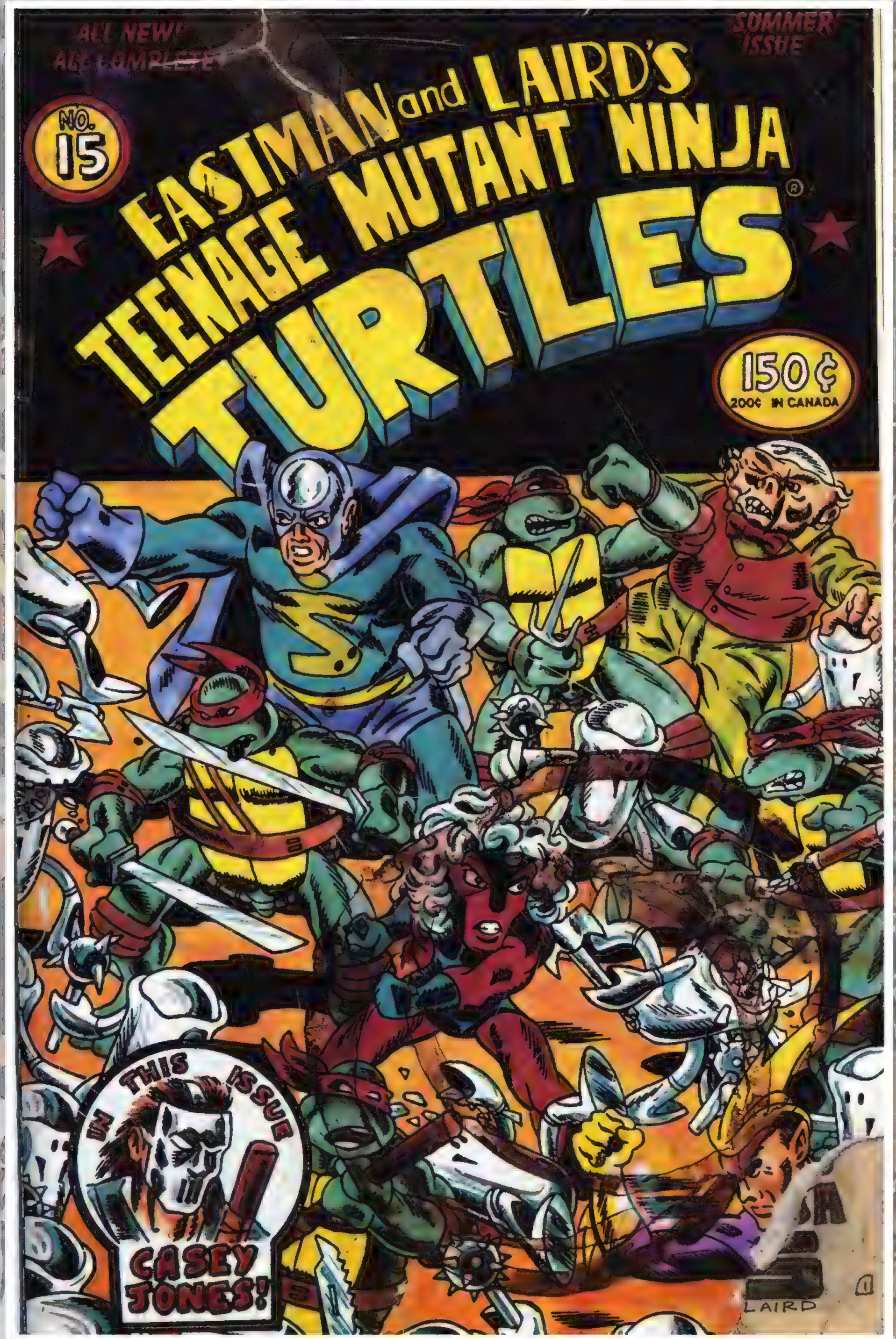
Page 10: More scenes of downtown Northampton— this time the front of the Hotel Northampton.

Page 19: The large middle panel has a perspective that I've always liked—the "down through the rafters" view. And once again I am impressed with Kevin's choices in the inking—I would very likely NOT have inked the tops of those beams in solid black, but it really works the way he did it.

Page 25: I know Kevin was partly inspired by the movie *The Untouchables* when he came up with this story (hence the title "The Unmentionables," and the look of the cover), but I don't think I ever wondered this until just now—where *did* the Turtles find the "Untouchables" gear that they're seen sporting in the top panel of this page—fedoras, bowler hats, tommy guns?

Page 26: I know it's a small thing, but I always liked the way that Kevin drew the "fake cow"—a framework of sticks and so forth held together with rope and apparently filled with rocks. Nice.

Page 31: I've never asked him, but I wonder if Kevin was referencing both the cow of this story as well as the battle cry of the TMNT in their first animated TV series here with Casey's shout of "Cowabunga!"


ALL NEW!
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SUMMER ISSUE
NO. 15
EASTMAN and LAIRD'S
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES®
150¢
200¢ IN CANADA
IN THIS ISSUE
CASEY JONES!
LAIRD

#15

NOW PLAYING VAMPIRE DINOSAURS FROM HELL
STEVE'S COMICS
HEY, RAPH--SEE ANY BACK ISSUES OF "DEADFACE"...?
OPEN
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DOME DOOM!
STORY and PENCILS by LAIRD · INKS by LAWSON · LETTERS by LAVIGNE
T-SHIRT designs by RYAN BROWN · THANKS TO MIKE DOONEY for his FIGURE ASSISTANCE

CHECK BETWEEN "DAREDEVIL" AND "DEADTIME STORIES", CASEY...

WOW! WHATTA FIND!-- THE "FLAMING CARROT/ TALES OF THE BEAN-WORLD" CROSSOVER SPECIAL, NEAR MINT CONDITION... AND IN THE QUARTER BIN, YET!

THANKS, MIKE... I KEEP FORGETTING ABOUT THAT ALPHABET STUFF...

"BE A REAL MAN OF STEEL!" WITH THIS OFFICIAL STAINLESS STEVE STEEL EXERCISE KIT.

JUSTICE FORCE

ALIEN QUEEN

BATMAN

ZIPPY

WHY DON'T'CHA READ THIS "PUMA BLUES" BOOK, CASE?

AH, I DUNNO... GUESS IT'S JUST THAT FLYING SEA CRITTERS MAKE MY SKIN CRAWL...

...AND THAT RÖBOT CHAUFFEUR... CREEP-O-RAMA!!--

WHOOPS!

BUMP!

METALLICA

HEY, SORRY ABOUT THAT DUDE... LEMME HELP!

METALLICA

WHOA! WEIRD LOOKIN' LITTLE GUY!

RRZZZAYAA!

CASEY, RAPH AND I HAVE ALL THAT WE WANT... ARE YOU READY?

HUH?

WHAT TH'--!?

3

K-KRASSH!

SKKRESH!

WATCHMEN

KRAZY KAT

AVENGERS

CEREBUS

GI JOE

THE GIANT GILA MONSTER

COMICS

INDEPENDENT

F-G

25¢ COMICS

4

5

WHAT THE HECK ARE THOSE THINGS?!

YA GOT ME... BUT I DON'T THINK THEY'RE AFTER THE LATEST ISSUE OF "SPACE ARK!"

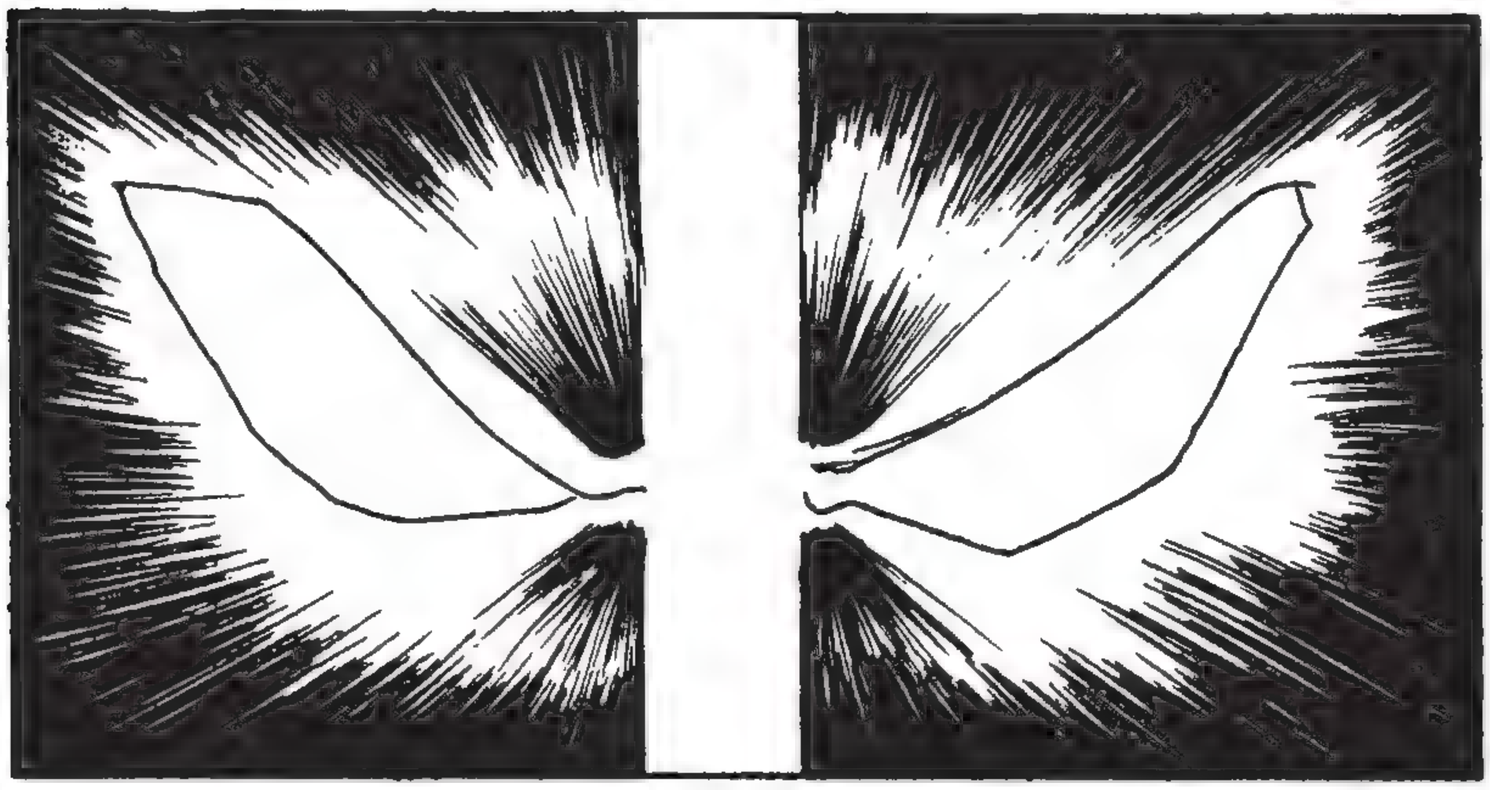
ALL RIGHT, YOU DEMENTED SHMOOS...

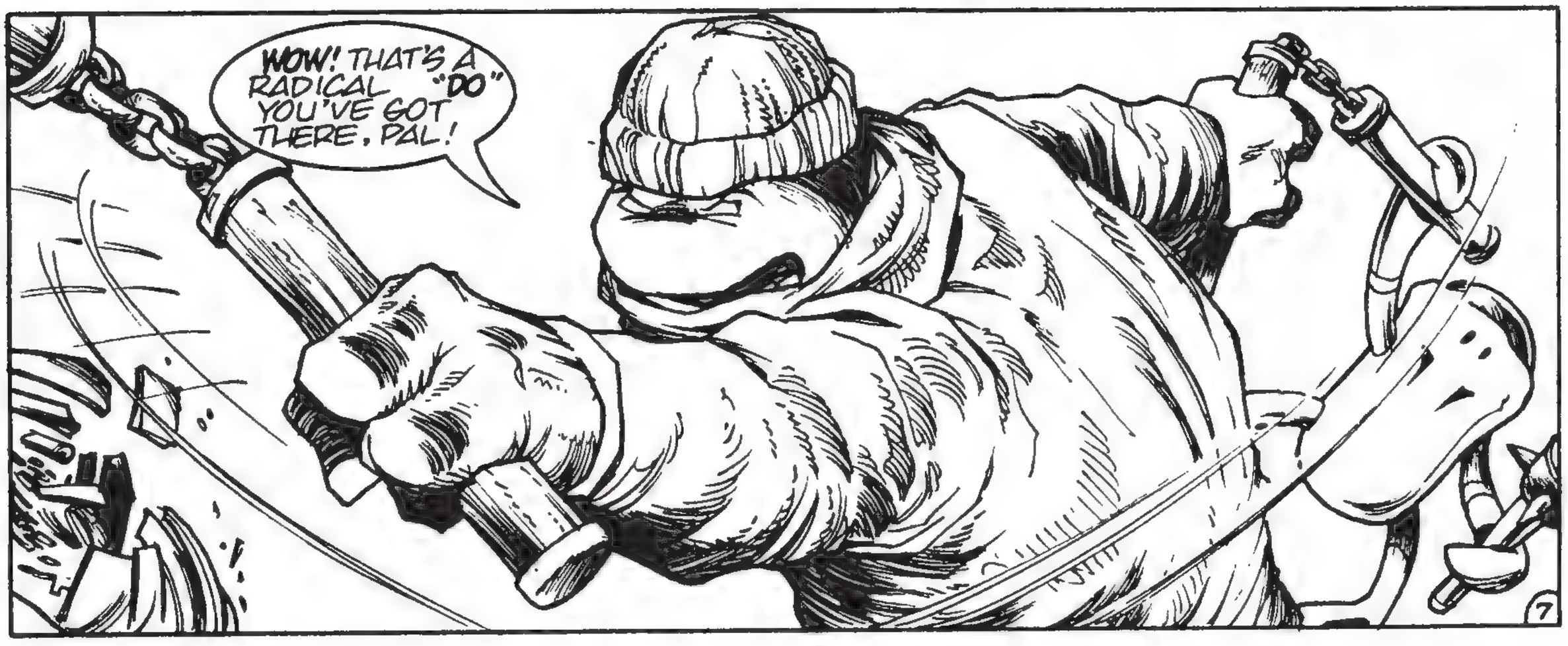
...TIME FOR A LITTLE PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE!

HAI!

GAAHH!

6




WOW! THAT'S A RADICAL "DO" YOU'VE GOT THERE, PAL!

GET OFFA' MY 'CHUK!

WANGK!

OH, NO--!

I'M OKAY... DON'T WORRY...

...THEY DON'T CALL ME "STAINLESS STEVE"...

JUST 'CUZ MY LAUNDRY'S SPOTLESS!

RAD! THAT'S WHAT I CALL...

...A REAL METAL HEAD!

SMACK!!!

YOU'RE A LITTLE CONFUSED, YOUNG FELLA!

THIS HERE SHORT STUFF IS METALHEAD... AND MY MONICKER IS "STAINLESS" STEVE STEEL!

HEY! LOOK OUT--!

OOPS! SORRY...

ZIK!

8

DON'T PANIC, FRIENDS -- IT'S JUST A PRE-RECORDED HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION!

AND THAT'S... THAT'S...

DR. DOME TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE JUSTICE FORCE -- PREPARE FOR YOUR DOOM! THIS ATTACK IS MERELY A MINOR HARBINGER OF THE CALAMITY TO FOLLOW! HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!

GI JOE

CASEY

WOW! THAT DUDE'S A DRAG!

UH, OH... IT'S STARTING TO SHORT OUT..!

FFZZZTSPIK!

EEEYOWW!!! FRAGMENT CITY!

INCREDIBLE... DR. DOME IS BACK -- AND WORSE THAN EVER!

WHO'S THIS DOC DOOM--

--SOME HEAVY-DUTY ANTISOCIAL TYPE?

"DOME" SON, NOT "DOOM".

DOME IS A BRILLIANT BUT VERY TWISTED-- AH, HERE IT IS..!

MY J.F. SIGNAL DEVICE... NEVER THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO USE IT AGAIN!

...HOPE THE BATTERIES ARE STILL GOOD!

9

THIS ALERT SIGNAL, IF IT WORKS, SHOULD REACH ALL OF THE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE JUSTICE FORCE THROUGH THEIR OWN SIGNAL DEVICES...

...IF THEY STILL HAVE THEM! WELL, HERE GOES...!

ZEE ZEE ZEE ZEE

10

11

NOW ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT. BY THE WAY, I'M SORRY YOU ALL GOT INVOLVED IN THIS...

...IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT DOME-- I NEVER EXPECTED HIM TO SHOW UP AGAIN!

ER... INCIDENTALLY... WHO ARE YOU FELLOWS?

WE ACCEPT CHECKS WITH TWO FORMS OF I.D. (LICENSE AND MAJOR CREDIT CARD)

WELL, I GUESS OUR SECRET IDENTITIES AS ORDINARY COMIC SHOP PATRONS HAVE BEEN BLOWN, SO...

...I'M MICHAELANGELO, THAT'S RAPHAEL -- WE'RE TWO OF THE TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES. THE TALL GUY WITH THE BAD ATTITUDE IS CASEY JONES. AND AS FOR GETTING INVOLVED, WE TEND TO DO THAT WHEN LITTLE MONSTERS TRY TO BASH OUR SKULLS IN WITH MACES!

YEAH! AND EVEN WORSE, THEY TRASHED MY COPY OF "FLAMING CARROT!"

NEARBY (RELATIVELY)...

HAHAHA! EXCELLENT! STEEL REACTED AS I EXPECTED... SOON ALL MY OLD FOES WILL GATHER IN NORTHAMPTON...

...."STAINLESS" STEVE STEEL, METAL HEAD, CAPTAIN DEADBOLT, ZIPPY LAD, JOEY LASTIC -- THE RUBBERBAND... AND BATTLING BERNICE!!!

AND THEN...

I WILL ACHIEVE MY ULTIMATE GOAL! HAHAHAHAHA!!!

13

LATER, IN OUTER SUBURBIA...

WOW! GREAT HOUSE, STEVE!

THANKS, MIKE... I DESIGNED IT MYSELF...

...AND SELLING THE FILM RIGHTS TO MY EXPLOITS AS "STAINLESS" STEVE STEEL PAID FOR THE CONSTRUCTION!

NEAT! KIND OF MAKES ME WONDER IF WE SHOULD GO PUBLIC!

IT'S A THOUGHT! BY THE WAY, THANKS AGAIN...

14

...FOR OFFERING TO HELP, AND GETTING YOUR BROTHERS DON AND LEO TO COME ALONG..!

UH-OH! I DON'T LIKE THIS-- THE DOOR'S UNLOCKED!

ALL RIGHT-- TROUBLE!

GET READY GUYS!

...WE'LL TAKE THEM BY SURPRISE! ON THREE ONE... TWO...

BOOM!

...THREE!

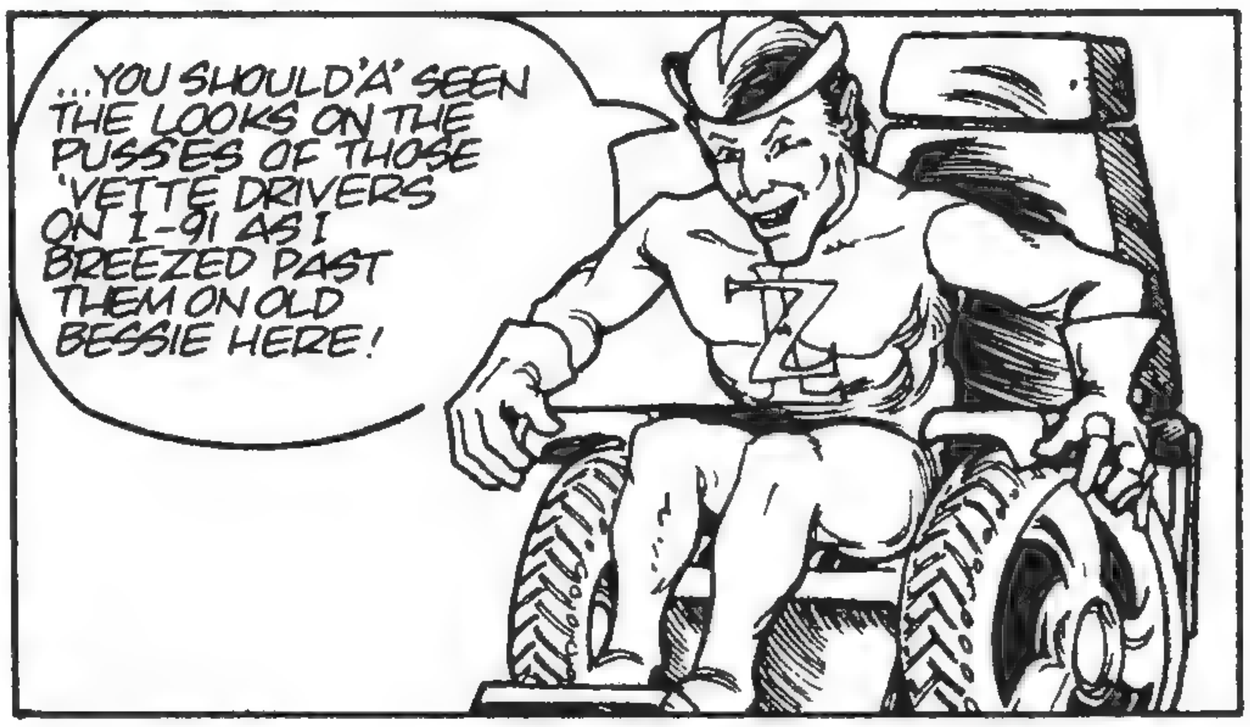
POOM!

HEY, IT'S JUST SOME OLD DUDE IN A WHEELCHAIR!

WHO--?!

ZIPPY!!!

GOOD TO SEE YOU, PAT... YOU'RE LOOKING WELL!
YEAH--AS WELL AS ANY WHEELCHAIR-JOCKEYING OLD FART, I RECKON!
MY GUESS IS YOU DON'T LET THAT SLOW YOU DOWN...
HEH! DAMN STRAIGHT...
6


...YOU SHOULD'A' SEEN THE LOOKS ON THE PUSSES OF THOSE 'VETTE DRIVERS ON I-91 AS I BREEZED PAST THEM ON OLD BESSIE HERE!

BUT WE CAN SWAP YARNS LATER... RIGHT NOW... YOU SHOULD INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR NEW BUDDIES, THEN TELL ME WHY WE'RE WAITING HERE FOR THE REST OF THE OLD GROUP TO SHOW UP...
...IF THEY CAN!

LATER...
AWESOME! A WHOLE ROOMFUL OF SUPER HEROES!
UH... SURE...!
'SCUSE ME, YOUNG FELLA...!
DIET EPS
16

DARN! THAT HAPPENS MORE AND MORE LATELY!

SORRY ABOUT SPILLING THAT DRINK ON YOU, SON...

DON'T SWEAT IT, MR. LASTIC!

...SO AFTER MY LEGS "BURNED OUT" FROM ALL THAT SUPERSONIC RUNNING, I HAD THIS RIG BUILT...

...TITANIUM ALLOY FRAME, MONOSHOCK SUSPENSION, INBOARD DISC BRAKES, KEVLAR-BELTED RACING TIRES...

MY LEGS MAY BE SHOT...

...BUT MY ARMS STILL GO LIKE THE DICKENS!

HMM... GREAT IDEA, PAT! BUT...

...YOU WERE ABOUT TO TELL ME THE STORY BEHIND THIS PHOTO OF CAPTAIN DEADBOLT...

OH, YEAH...

...YOU KNOW HOW CAP HAD THAT ABILITY TO LOCK HIS BODY INTO IMMOVABILITY IN ANY POSITION--AN' NOTHIN' SHORT OF A TANK COULD BUDGE HIM? WELL, DURING A JOHN TRAVOLTA LOOK-ALIKE CONTEST BACK IN '77 HE FROZE UP LIKE THAT... HASN'T MOVED SINCE!

...STILL DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW WHETHER HE'S ALIVE OR DEAD!

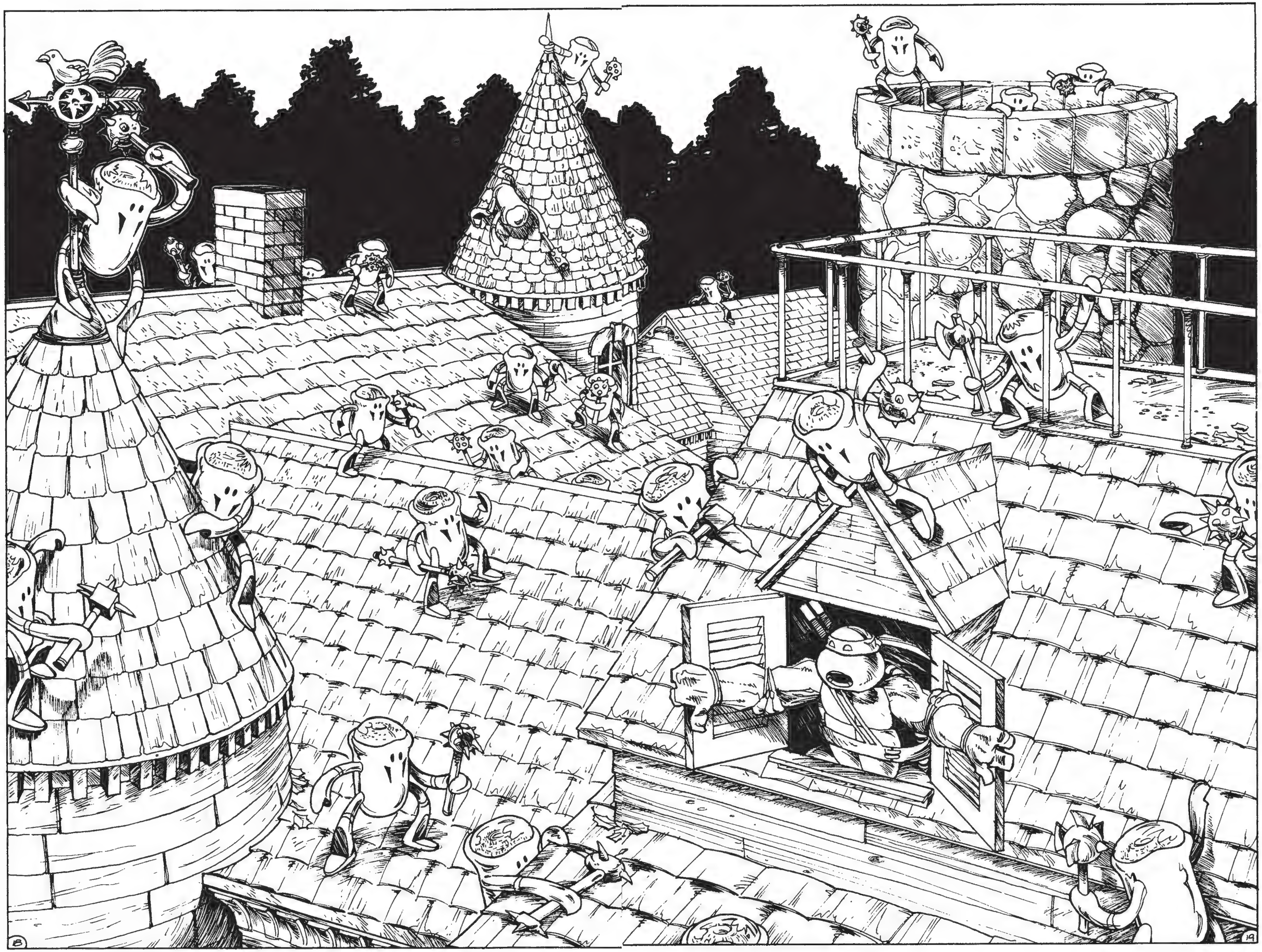
HEY...! YOU HEAR THAT? SOMETHING ON THE ROOF--!

IT'S STARTING...

RAPHAEL, STAY HERE WITH STEVE, ZIPPY, AND JOE...

...THE REST OF YOU--UP ON THE ROOF!

UH-OH..!



SBAK!

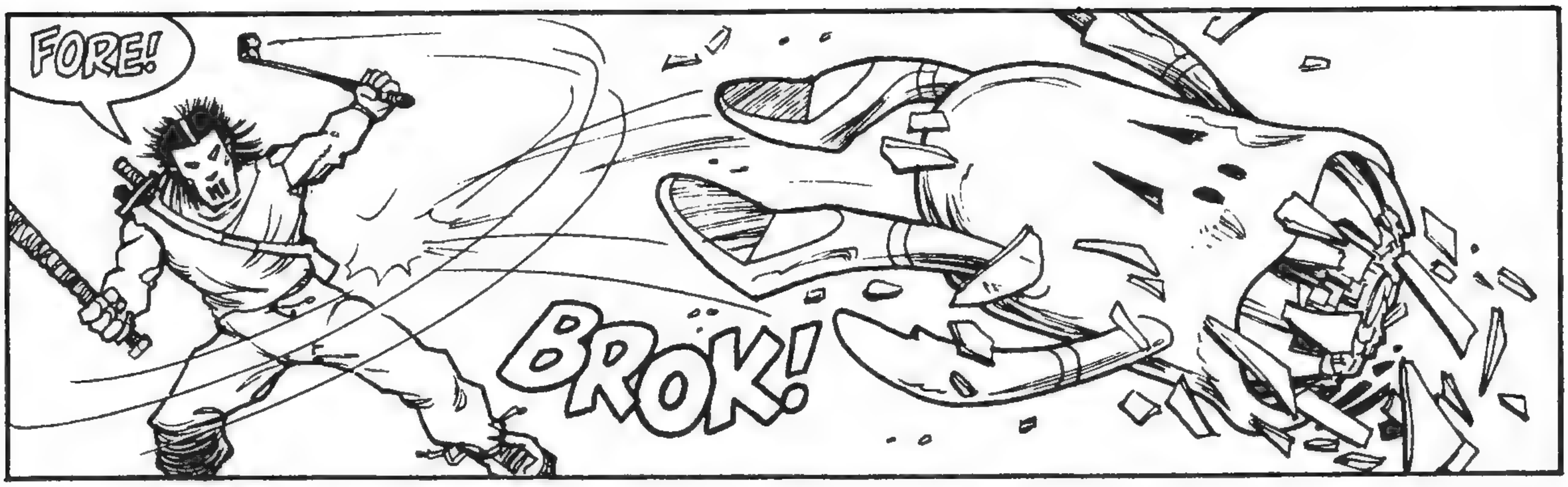
YOW!!!

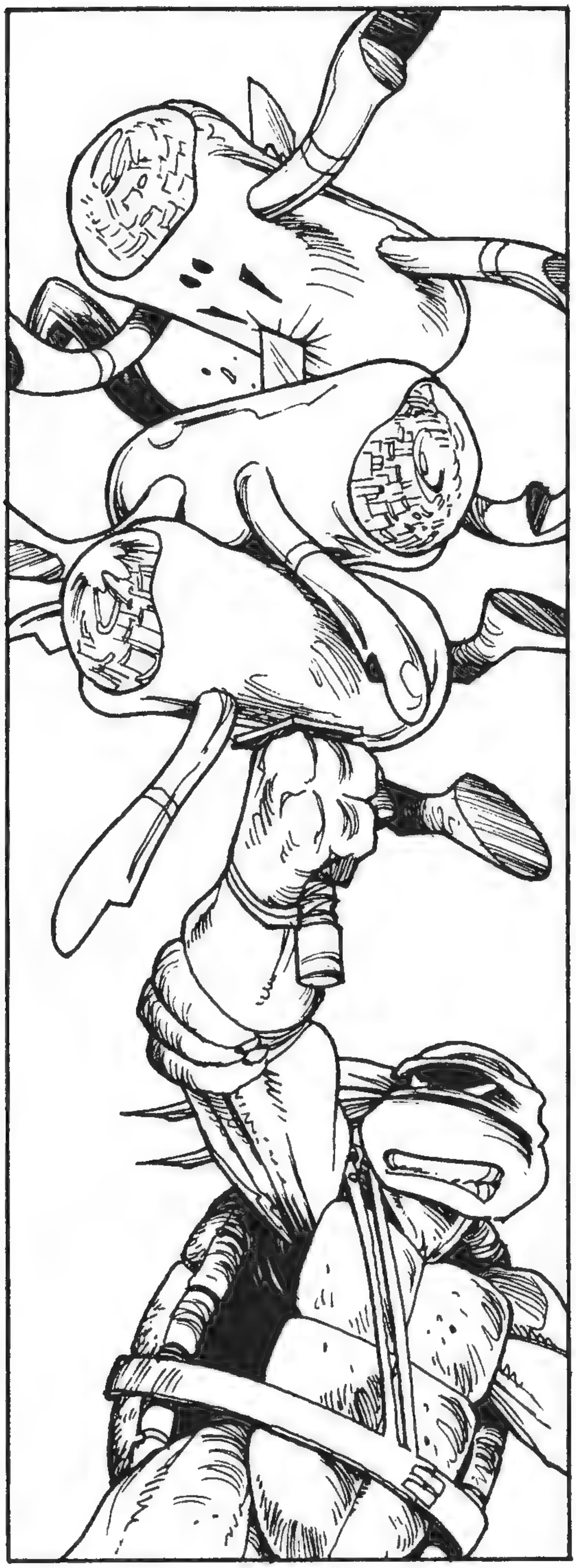
CHEK!

FLICK!

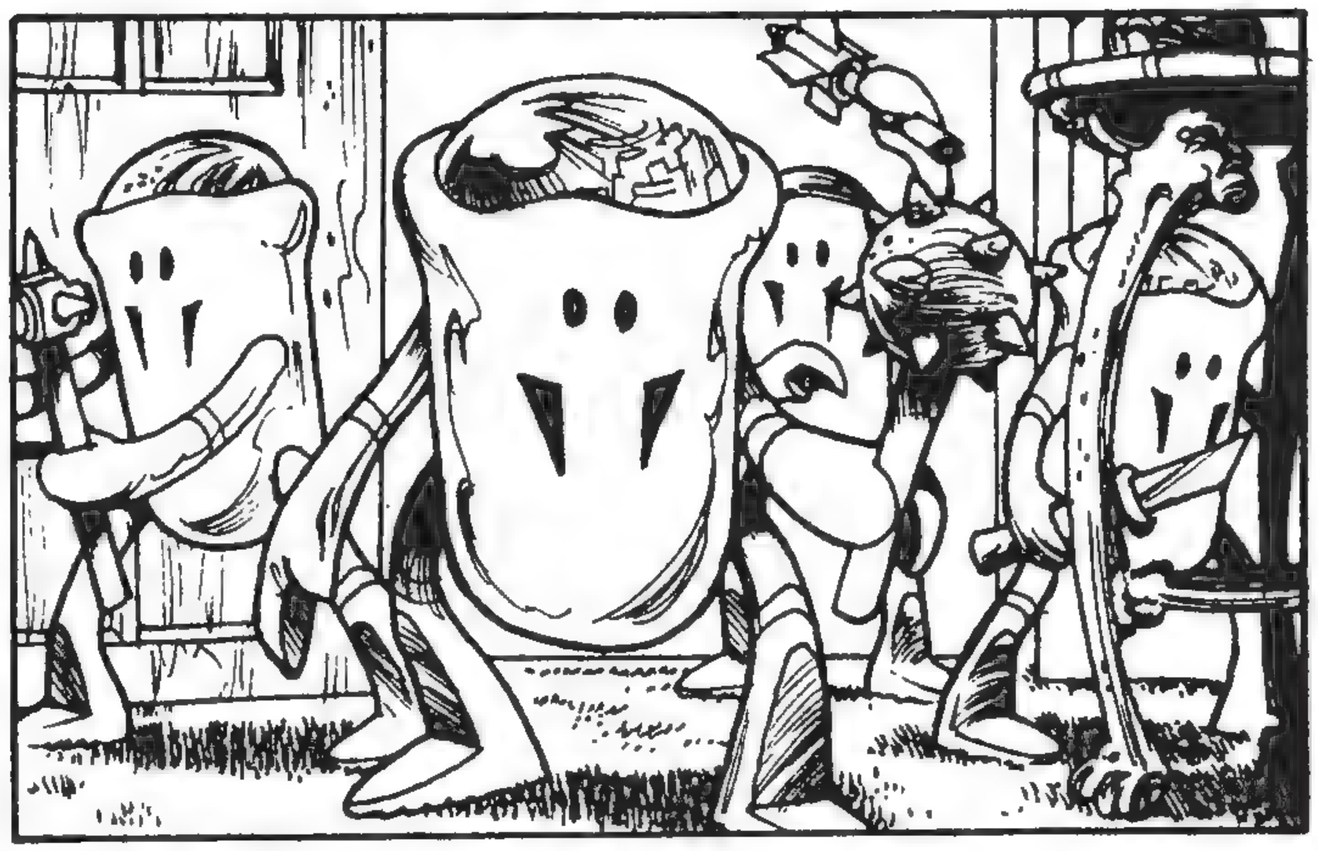
BAP!

ALL RIGHT! LET'S KICK SOME DOME!


FORE!
BROK!



MEANWHILE, DOWNSTAIRS ...
THEY'RE IN THE HOUSE... ...GET READY!



IT'S VIOLENCE TIME!
YAAAAAAH!
21

RAPHAEL--! WATCH YOUR BACK, LAD!

HUH--?!

ZZOOUUUNNNGGG!!!

HEH... I MAY BE STUCK IN THIS WHEELCHAIR...

...BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T DO...

THE OL' "BUZZ-SAW HANDS" TRICK!

HEH! WHAT D'YA KNOW--STILL WORKS LIKE A CHARM!

BZZASH!

THAT'S THE LAST OF 'EM, LEO--!

GREAT! LET'S GET DOWNSTAIRS AND SEE IF RAPH NEEDS OUR HELP!

CURSES! MY DOMEOIDS™ HAVE FAILED! NOW I MUST UNLEASH MY ULTIMATE WEAPON...!

22

RAPHAEL! YOU OKAY--?!

IN THE PINK, LEO!

GOOD! LET'S GET OUTSIDE FOR A MOP-UP OF ANY DOMEOIDS™ STILL MOVING!

LOOKS ALL CLEAR, LEO!

YES... BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT THIS ASSAULT WAS ONLY A PRELUDE TO SOMETHING WORSE...!

YOU GUESSED RIGHT, LEONARDO...

...LOOK!

GOOD GRIEF!

HAHAHAHA!!! YOU MAY HAVE ESCAPED THE DOMEOIDS™ BUT NOW YOU FACE THE ULTIMATE WEAPON-- THE DOMEBOT™ !!!

PREPARE FOR YOUR DOOM!

WHO WRITES HIS DIALOGUE?

WHAT A CORNBALL !!!

26

POONG!

NNNOOOo--!!!

27

SMASH!

OW!

HEY!-- GREAT KICK, LADY!

WHY DO ALL THIS, DOME...?

...UGCK--

WHY?!

I-- I DID IT... TO FIND YOU! TO BRING YOU OUT OF HIDING... ...BERNICE!

28

BUT DOME, THAT'S NOT--

BACK OFF, STEEL!

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK, DOME...

...WHAT DO YOU SEE?!

D-DON'T TOY WITH ME BERNICE! I SEE ONLY THE WOMAN I LOVE... HAVE LOVED THESE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS!

LOOK MORE CAREFULLY...

DO YOU SEE IN ME THE AGE THAT LINES YOUR FACE... THAT RAVAGES ALL OF YOUR FORMER TEAMMATES?

AND LOOK AT METAL HEAD...

...HIS SYNTHETIC NATURE CHEATS TIME... OF ALL OF YOU, HE ALONE RETAINS A YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

YOU'RE RIGHT...

...YOU SHOULD BE OLDER...

...Y--YOU'RE NOT BERNICE!

GIVE THAT MAN A MEDAL! DOME, MEET ANANDA-- BERNICE'S DAUGHTER!

D--DAUGHTER..?

YES! THOSE THINGS HAPPEN, YOU KNOW... TIME PASSES, THINGS GROW...

...THINGS DIE.

MY MOTHER GAVE UP BEING "BATTLING" BERNICE, HAD ME AND LIVED A NORMAL LIFE...

...SHE DIED THREE YEARS AGO.

MOM USED TO TELL ME STORIES ABOUT HER DAYS WITH THE JUSTICE FORCE... OF HER UNREQUITED INFATUATION WITH STEVE STEEL...

...AND OF YOUR EQUALLY UNREQUITED PASSION FOR HER. I KNOW THAT'S A LARGE PART OF WHY YOU LEFT THE ORIGINAL JUSTICE FORCE.

YOUR RESENTMENT AND HURT FROZE YOU IN A TIMELESS STATE... WHILE ALL OF YOUR FORMER ALLIES MATURED, MOVED ON, YOU REMAINED BEHIND, MIRED IN YOUR OBSESSIONS.

YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN AN INDUSTRY OF HATE...

...AND YOU ARE ITS WASTE PRODUCT.

30

NOT NECESSARILY.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU'RE WISE FOR YOUR AGE, ANANDA... I WISH I HAD BEEN AS WISE. BUT YOU NEED A FEW MORE YEARS...

...TO REALIZE THAT IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CHANGE... AS LONG AS THERE'S LIFE, THERE'S HOPE FOR REDEMPTION...

...HOPE FOR EVEN YOU, DOME. COME AND STAY WITH METALHEAD AND ME... MAYBE WE CAN START TO HEAL SOME OLD WOUNDS.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

I...

UH... WELL...

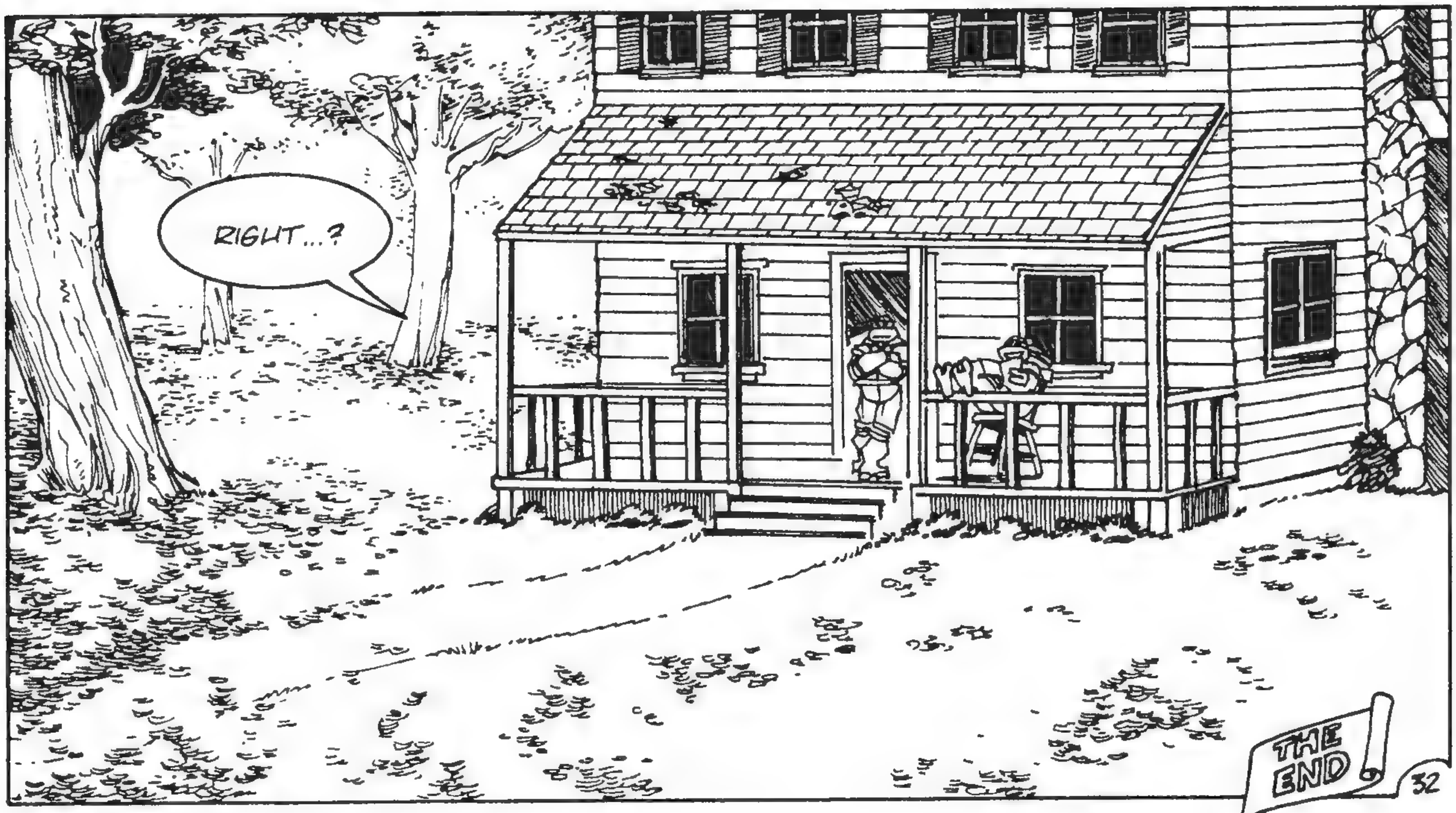
...WHY NOT...?

EPILOGUE

ALL-NEW!
SO... DO YOU THINK IT'LL LAST?
HUH? WHAT...?
JUSTICE FORCE

YOU KNOW... STAINLESS, STEVE, METALHEAD, AN' DOC DOME -- HOW LONG ARE THEY GONNA STAY HOUSEMATES.
JUSTICE FORCE
GOOD QUESTION, RAPH -- I'D SAY THEY'VE GOT A 50/50 CHANCE...

..."TIME HEALS ALL WOUNDS", RIGHT?


RIGHT...?
THE END
32

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

I think one of my favorite parts of *TMNT* #15 was what Pete wanted to do with the cover—basically make it look like a really old, well-read comic—which was probably a lot like most of the ones in our personal collections. From what I remember, he drew and painted it, then made a good-quality color copy—then beat the crap out of it! He did everything from using it as a coaster for his morning coffee to leaving it on the floor of his car for a few weeks while he did his normal errands.

He completely pulled it off. To the point where I would hear from different collectors back in the day that when they bought it, they actually thought they had gotten a beat up copy and tried to return it!

I know we both *really* wanted to bring "superheroes" into the TMNT universe—those were our roots in many ways (reading the classic Marvel and DC stuff). But I think we both thought we wanted to do it in our own way—and something different. I mean seriously, how do you follow *Watchmen* with a new and cool superhero concept?

There are so many parts of this issue I like, everything from the comic store location in downtown Northampton to the style and pacing. I thought Pete and Jim Lawson made a great artistic team, one that would work very well together for many, many years to come!

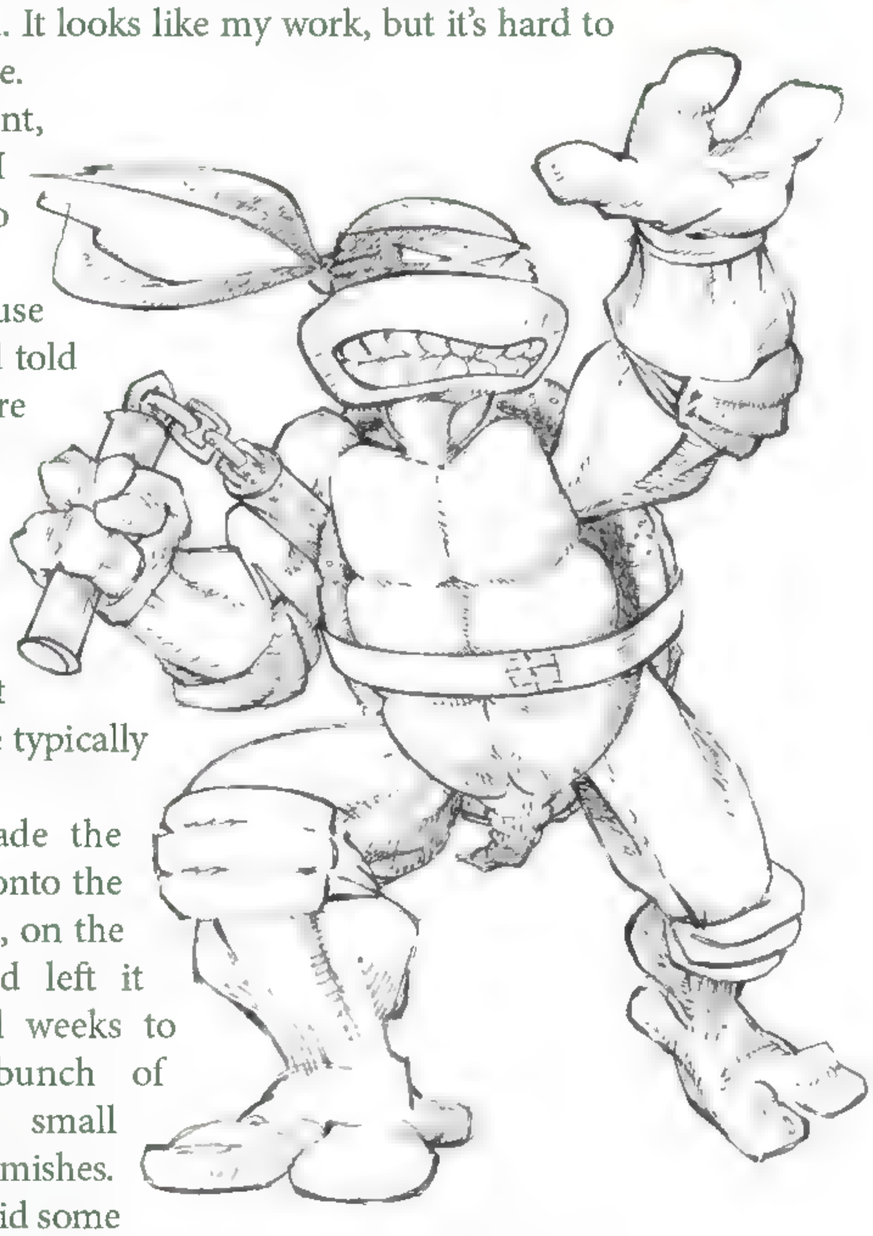
If I had any complaints at all about the issue, I wish it would have been longer—explored more of the origin of the Justice Force, some of their other battles—but then again, the message Pete wanted to get across with the story might not have been as strong. Cool beans!

PETER LAIRD

I am proud of the cover for this issue (hopefully not unjustifiably so) for this reason: I think it is the first time (as far as I know, anyway) that a comic book cover was ever deliberately done so as to appear—in a sort of *trompe l'oeil* fashion—as if it were a beat-up copy of an old comic book, complete with tears, scuffs, stains, and ham-handed repairs done with cellophane tape.

How was it created, you ask?

Well, I started by designing and penciling the cover to look sort of like something from the 1940s–1950s Golden Age of comics. I designed and drew by hand the logo, in what I thought looked like an "old school" style. I asked Ryan Brown to ink the cover drawing, not in his usual style, but aping the style of inking popular in many comics of that era, and Ryan did a great job. Then I colored it—well, I *think* I colored it, but it is possible that Steve Lavigne did. It looks like my work, but it's hard to say at this late date.



In any event, once colored, I took the art up to Wilmington, Vermont, because Steve Bissette had told me of a shop there which could do full-color Xerox prints on glossy paper—a paper stock somewhat similar to what comics covers are typically printed on.

Once I'd made the print, I tossed it onto the floor of my truck, on the driver's side, and left it there for several weeks to accumulate a bunch of scratches, dents, small tears and other blemishes. Following that, I did some strategic folding and tearing, and in the torn-off lower right-hand corner pasted a piece from an actual interior first page of a *TMNT* comic (I think it was issue #2, but I'm not sure). Then came the "coffee" stains—not actually coffee, which refused to do what I wanted it to do (too light), but brown ink. Finally, I applied some Scotch tape at the top of the cover to simulate a repair to one of the rips.

The result was an original that was a fairly decent simulation of an actual damaged comic book cover. I've often wondered how many people thought it was, in fact, damaged when they first saw the printed book.

Of course, doing something like this would have been SO much easier if, back in 1988, computer technology had been where it is today.

ANNOTATIONS

Page 1: This was my second solo issue, and already I was falling behind! It's a good thing that Jim Lawson was available to ink this issue, and—if memory serves—I think he inked it (except for some of the larger black areas) with the fine-tipped Tombow ball-point markers of which we were all so fond at that time (mostly due to the fact that their ink was almost 100% waterproof. And they were cheap).

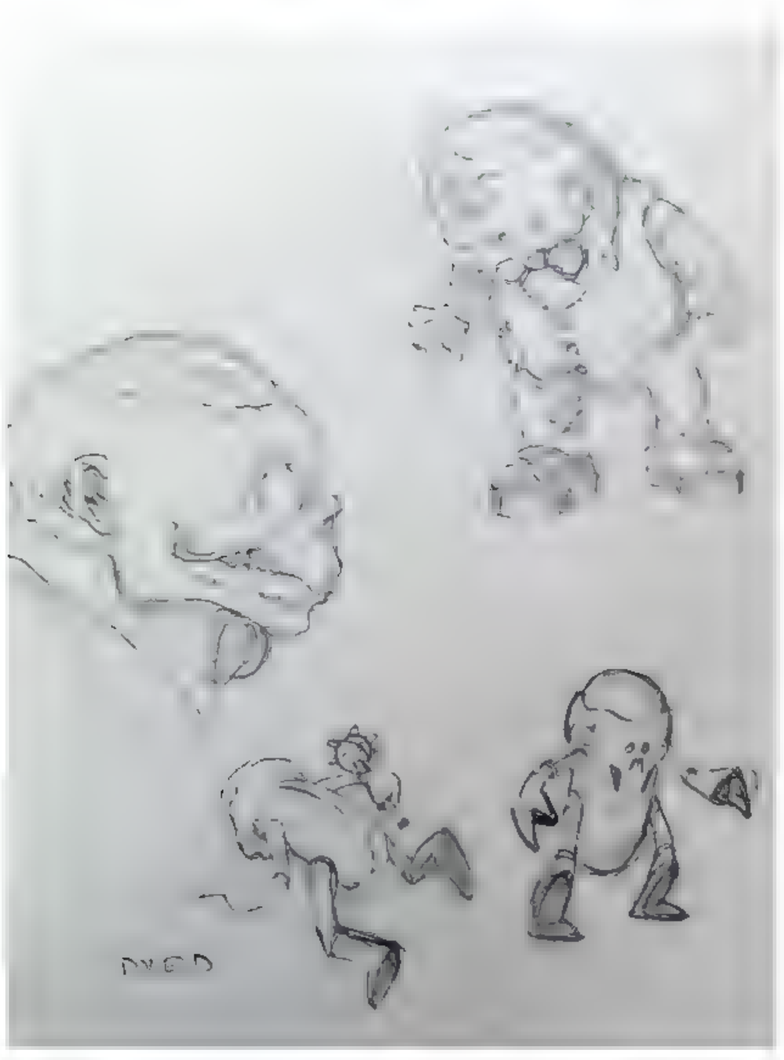
Once again, fun was being had with including real Northampton landmarks—in this case, the Calvin Theater on the left and "Jake's" (a small coffee shop/restaurant), both on King Street. For this splash page, though, I squeezed in between them the fictional facade of "Steve's Comic," where the initial action of this issue will take place.

Page 2: It's fun to look at the various items on sale in the comic shop—in a way, they represent a time capsule of some of the comics we were reading at the time (like *Puma Blues*, *Xenozoic Tales*, *Albedo, Concrete*, and *Trollords*, to name a few) and the geek toys we were hankering after (like the vinyl model kits of "ED-209" from *Robocop* and the "Alien Queen" from *Aliens*).

Page 3: Metalhead, the ageless android and former member of the Justice Force, was based in part (visually, anyway) on my heavy metal music-loving pal Ryan Brown. In fact, I think Ryan may have inked the "Metallica" design on Metalhead's t-shirt in the third panel of this page.

Pages 4–5: This is the first of four two-page spreads in this issue. I'm not sure if Jim got tired of inking the tiny comic book covers, but for some reason I pasted up small black and white Xeroxes of some actual comic book covers for the display behind Steve Steel.

I've always enjoyed drawing robots, and the "Domeoids" were fun to design.



Page 9: I chuckle when I look at the last panel and see the old-fashioned toggle switch on Steve Steel's Justice Force signal device.

Pages 10–11: Is it technically a two-page spread when it is actually four panels spread across two pages (and in this case, only three of the four panels go across both pages), instead of just one large image? I don't know, but I am counting this as a two-page spread.

In the bottom panel, which shows Zippy Lad in his easy chair, the legs and hand to the right belong to another member of the Justice Force—Captain Deadbolt. If memory serves, this is actually a name Kevin Eastman came up with, and I ran with it. Later on in this issue, we learn that Captain Deadbolt had the super power to lock himself into one position, and—as Zippy Lad tells it—"… nothing short of a tank could budge him." I had plans to do something with Captain Deadbolt in a future issue, but nothing ever came of it. For this issue, he really doesn't play much of a part. But I kind of like the fact that Zippy Lad has him on display in his house.

Oh, and the "ZEE ZEE ZEE" sound that Steve Steel's Justice Force signal device makes is a tip of the hat to how Jimmy Olsen's signal watch sounded in the *Superman* comics that I read as a youngster.

Page 12: In the second panel, Michelangelo introduces himself to Steve Steel and refers to himself as "one of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles." I read this now and cringe a little bit. It seems so odd to me now that he would refer to himself in this way, yet apparently twenty-four years ago I had no problem with it.

Page 13: I love the way Jim inked Dr. Dome on this page and page 12 as well.

Page 14: In the top panel, a caption describes Steve's house as being in "outer suburbia"… which seems odd to me now, given that I don't think Northampton is really big enough to have suburbs, let alone outer suburbs.

Page 15: It pains me to see a typo in the second panel—"surprise" is spelled "surpise."

Page 16: What happens when superheroes get old? I enjoyed playing with this idea here, with Zippy Lad, a super-speedster who can no longer run… but can still use his super-fast arms to propel his wheelchair at high velocities...

Page 17: … and on this page, in the top panel, Joe. E. Lastic demonstrates that even a super-stretchy guy can have his limits. I guess the point was that the elastic nature of his body had changed as he got older, to the point where his limbs didn't rebound quite as easily or completely.

By the way, this character's name came from a joke my father used to tell when I was younger—I can't remember the whole thing, just the line about "Joe E. Lastic and his Rubber Band."

Pages 18–19: Here's the third two-page spread. This one was fun to draw, with the Domeoids crawling all over the complicated roofline of Steve Steel's house.

Page 20: I'm generally not crazy about my layouts—Kevin is far better at it than I am—but occasionally I do something I am happy with. In this case, it's the second and third panels where Leo stabs one of the Domeoids and then flicks him off his sword. I like how all you see of Leo in these two panels is his arm and his sword.

Page 21: It's silly, but I like the "shish kebab" effect in panel two where Leo has impaled three Domeoids on one of his blades.

Page 22: Clearly inspired by all the old *Flash* comics I read when I was young, I like the panel with Zippy Lad doing "the ol' 'Buzz Saw Hands' trick!"

ANNOTATIONS

Page 23: It's a fairly simple thing, but I like the cinematic quality of the two wide and shallow panels (the second and fourth ones), which are meant to show parts of the giant Domebot that appears on the following pages. Whenever I see these panels I envision in my head metal parts moving and shifting… and I could very easily see something like this in a movie in a series of quick cuts to establish important action going on at the same time as the main action, but as yet unseen by the main characters.

Actually, I just thought of an example of this—in the movie *Aliens*, when the Colonial Marines are slowly making their way into the building where the aliens have been creating their nest, and there are several quick cuts showing alien anatomy moving as the aliens begin to react to the presence of the Marines, who are as yet unaware of the aliens' presence all around them.

Pages 24–25: The last of the two-page spreads for this issue. This one was fun, as I enjoy drawing crazy machinery. And Jim inked it brilliantly.

In fact, Jim inked this whole issue brilliantly. I hadn't looked closely at this in a long time, and I love what he did with my pencils. In places, I see touches that remind me of Neal Adams.

Page 26: On the first page of this issue, there is a note in the credits reading "Thanks to Mike Dooney for his figure assistance." That was in reference to this page—for some reason, my drawing of this character racing in on her high-tech roller skates just looked awful… and Mike re-penciled her body and made her look a lot better. It's possible he also re-worked some of the other panels in which she appeared, but I can't remember. I wish I'd made copies of the pencils for this issue, but I am pretty sure I didn't.

Page 27: More great inking by Jim—he did such a nice job on all of the mechanical stuff I drew.

Pages 28–31: A little bit of soap opera here, as the true nature of Dr. Dome's obsession is revealed… and we see that time has moved further forward than he thought. A bit of trivia: I got the name "Ananda" from a very nice waitress who served a group of us Mirage dudes in a restaurant in Peterborough, NH, on our way back from either a toy shopping trip or an appearance at a convention (I can't remember which). I thought she had a unique name and it stuck with me.

Page 32: I guess I liked these "Epilogue" pages. I tried to combine notes of optimism and subtle melancholy in this page, with Mike responding to Raph's musing about whether the truce and domestic arrangement between Dr. Dome and Steve Steel would work out with a "Time heals all wounds" line… but that is followed by silence from Raph, and Mike saying hopefully, but with a touch of uncertainty, "… right?"

Page 33: I think this house ad was for the fourth or fifth printing of the original issue #1 of *TMNT*. It features art penciled by me and inked by Kevin.

Page 34–37: Back in the days when people sent in actual letters as opposed to email, I had the task of retyping all of the letters we chose to print so that I could format them into the letters column. I think I was using an Atari ST computer and a desktop publishing program called "Calamus" at the time.

This particular set of letters—especially those on the first three pages—make me chuckle. So many people were miffed that Kevin and I were no longer doing the *TMNT* comics together. (I especially liked the comparison of our collaboration to a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup.) Of course, it was also fun to let these disappointed fans know that Kevin and I were teaming up again to do the "Return to New York" three-issue story arc which would begin with issue #19.

Back cover: I LOVE this thing! Basically, it's a fantasy portrait of Kevin and me in the studio, surrounded by various comic and toy-related clutter, as well as the four Turtles (who seem to be having a great time posing, goofing off, and helping Kevin airbrush an image from the *Michelangelo*—or "Michaelangelo," as we stupidly misspelled it for years—*One Issue Micro-Series*, while the Fugitoid looks on. There are so many fun little details to find in this drawing, which Kevin and I worked on together. At least on the pencils and inks—Kevin painted the finished drawing, as I recall.

I especially like the "Demon" wastebasket near my drawing table, the "Thing" figure on the upper left hand bookshelf, the "Zits from Space" poster on the wall behind Leonardo, and the little framed portrait of Splinter with the title "Dad."

This art had actually been created in 1985 and was intended for publication in an ad rag put out by Fantagraphics, but that thing folded before we got a chance to get this piece in. The sense of goofy fun and camaraderie in this drawing is very clearly from the time it was drawn, and NOT from the time when this comic book was published.

EASTMAN AND LAIRD'S

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES®

#17

DISTRACTIONS

I'VE BEEN TRAVELING FOR DAYS, RESTLESS AND ANXIOUS IN MY QUEST... STOPPING FOR NOTHING.

NOW I MUST...

... MY BODY AND MIND ARE WEAK, I NEED REST AND FOOD.

GAME IS SCARCE THIS TIME OF YEAR...

... TONIGHT I AM FORTUNATE.

CRUNCH KUSTLE SNAP KRACK

GREAK KRACK SNAP SNAP GREAK KRACK

FATHER--!

FORGIVE OUR INTRUSION... WE MEAN YOU NO HARM!

WE ARE... TRAVELERS, LIKE YOURSELF.

MY BOY SAKAI...

MY DAUGHTER TAI...

... AND I AM TOSHIRO.

I AM MICHAELANGELO. PLEASE, SHARE MY FIRE AND FOOD.

2

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

WE PLAN TO VISIT OUR COUSINS, IN KYOTO, JUST NORTH OF HERE. THERE HAS BEEN TROUBLE IN OUR PROVINCE... IT WAS NOT SAFE TO STAY.

AND YOU?

I AM LOOKING FOR MY BROTHERS. WE WERE SEPARATED WHEN WE FIRST CAME HERE.

WE WISH YOU LUCK, AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS. OUR JOURNEY IS LONG, AND TIME IS SHORT... WE MUST DEPART.

I ENJOYED THE COMPANY...

...SAFE TRAVELS TO YOU.

AND TO YOU, MY FRIEND.

BYE...

I GUESS I SHOULD BE MOVING ON ALSO.

NICE FAMILY... AND TAI-- SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL!

HORSES!

KA-CLOP KER-CLOP KER-CLOP KER-CLOP KER-CLOP KER-CLOP

THEY SEEM TO BE IN A HURRY, TOO!

4.

THE FAMILY--!!

FATHER, I HEAR SOMETHING...

HORSES!

TACHI...

KA-KLOP KER-KLOP KA-KLOP KLOP KER-KLOP

YOU OLD FOOL!

YOU HAVE SHAMED MY FATHER AND ME IN FRONT OF OUR PEOPLE, AND DISHONORED YOURSELF BY RUNNING--THE DAIMYO DEMANDS YOUR HEAD!

KILL LORD TOSHIRO AND THE WHELP! ... THE GIRL IS MINE!!!

6.

NO!

CHUD

CHUD

NOOOO...

GUK

FATHER!!!

YOUR INTERFERENCE WILL COST YOU YOUR LIFE, NINJA!

I HAVE MY BRIDE, BUT I WILL RETURN FOR YOU, OLD MAN--I WILL BE YOUR END!

BRIDE?!

THAT'S TACHI, DAIMYO ORKAI'S SON-- MY DAUGHTER IS BEING FORCED TO MARRY THAT DEMON!

MY RULE OF THIS PROVINCE WOULD END WITH THEIR **MARRIAGE** AND MY **DEATH**... GIVING TACHI COMPLETE CONTROL OF MY LANDS.

THE JOINING OF THE TWO PROVINCES WOULD GIVE LORD ORKAI TWICE AS MUCH FARM-LAND AND PEOPLE TO EXPLOIT.

HIS BLOODY QUEST FOR POWER SHALL KILL US ALL!

THAT IS NOT RIGHT...

...HE MUST BE STOPPED! HIDE YOURSELF-- I WILL RETURN YOUR DAUGHTER TO YOU.

LATER...

I FOLLOWED THEIR TRACKS DEEP INTO LORD ORKAI'S PROVINCE.

... NOW I NEED ANOTHER DISGUISE TO PURSUE THEM FURTHER.

YOU KNOW THE LAW, PEASANT-- NO ONE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE CITY AFTER SUNSET!

I AM ILL AND SLOW. THE GUARDS MADE ME WORK LATE TO MAKE UP FOR--

BEGONE, PEASANT! A NIGHT IN THE WOODS WILL INSPIRE YOU TO WORK HARDER! HAH!

THWAK

WHAP

CHUD

I HAVE NEED OF YOUR HAT.

...MY BLADE DRANK DEEP THAT DAY, I'LL TELL YOU... ALL FIVE OF THE EMPEROR'S BEST FOUND THEIR END.

HA. HA. HA... YOU'RE A DRUNK AND A LIAR, SHUMO! HA. HA!

HERE'S TO A GOOD STORY, ANYWAY-- HAHA!

AHHH... BURR, IT IS LATE, AND I HAVE DUTIES IN THE MORNING...

I BID YOU GOOD NIGHT.

CHUD WHAP OFFF KRAK HAWK

ORKAI PROTECTS HIMSELF WELL... A MASSIVE FORTRESS, WITH ONLY ONE WAY IN AND OUT.

I HOPE THIS GUARD'S UNIFORM WILL BE MY KEY.

12

13

HALT! WHERE'S YOUR HELMET, SOLDIER?!

WAIT A MINUTE-- I DON'T RECOGNIZE YOU--

DOES THIS HELP?!

SORRY ABOUT THE HAT...

...I'LL JUST BORROW YOURS.

14.

YOU HAVE FAILED ME, TACHI -- WHERE IS THE HEAD OF LORD TOSHIRO?!

THERE WAS A WARRIOR--A NINJA-- WHO AIDED THEM... HE KILLED MY GUARDS IN SECONDS! I THOUGHT IT BEST TO RETURN WITH PRINCESS TAI...

COWARD-- YOU SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM YOURSELF! YOU DISHONOR ME AS WELL!

LORD TOSHIRO SHALL PERISH BY MY OWN HAND--

DO NOT MOCK ME!

YOUR INCOMPETENCE SPEAKS ENOUGH-- TOMORROW MORNING YOU MARRY PRINCESS TAI AND THE EXECUTIONER WILL SEE TO LORD TOSHIRO

LEAVE ME!

YES, FATHER.

15

CRUNCH!

I AM CLOSE NOW--
SHE'S HERE.

THESE CATACOMBS ARE ENDLESS--
BUT THIS WAY, I FEEL HER PRESENCE.

GAH. WHAT A STENCH...
MANY HAVE PERISHED
HERE.

THEY WOULD PUT
HER HERE...

URMMM...

MICHAELANGELO!

TAI -- ARE YOU HURT?!

I AM UNHARMED, MY FATHER AND BROTHER, ARE THEY...

THEY ARE SAFE.

YOU CAME FOR ME--?

OH, NO... CHOKE!

YES,

STAND BACK--I'M GOING TO TRY TO GET THROUGH THIS DOOR!

GRAAHHH!

TAI, GET BACK!

EEEEE!!

AARRRR...

KILL!

NOT TODAY, CREEP...

...NOT EVER!!

18.

CHINK KHIK

RUN, TAI -- I'LL CATCH UP...

IN A MINUTE...

...OR TWO!

RAHHGG!

NOOOO!!!

LOST, PRETTY ONE?

SURELY...

...YOU WERE NOT...

...LEAVING.

OHHHHHH...

WE SHOULD KILL HER NOW, AND JUST TAKE LORD TOSHIRO'S PROVINCE BY FORCE!

PATIENCE, TACHI... YOU WILL GET YOUR WISH, AFTER THE MARRIAGE.

A VIOLENT TAKE OVER WOULD DRAW ATTENTION. OUR PLANS MUST CONTINUE UN-NOTICED... **FOR NOW!**

AHHH... YOUR LOVELY BRIDE WAKES.

WELCOME TO OUR HUMBLE HOME... I HOPE OUR HOSPITALITY PLEASES YOU.

I DO LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING YOU AS A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

NEVER-- I WOULD RATHER DIE FIRST!

I'M SURE THAT COULD BE ARRANGED...

WE ANXIOUSLY AWAIT THAT MOMENT.

PTWEW

MASTER...

22.

I'VE COME FOR THE PRINCESS...

SNAP

YOU!!

IMPRESSIVE TO SEE YOU HAVE MADE IT THIS FAR, NINJA...

...BUT NOW YOU HAVE BEGUN TO ANNOY ME....

I HAVEN'T EVEN STARTED YET!

GGGROWWLLLL...

23.

FACE ME--

NOW YOU MUST FIGHT A SAMURAI!

UCK!

24

ONE SIDE, BUB-- PRINCESS TAI IS MINE!

DA-DA-DA-

UT, OH...

STAY BACK!

QUICKLY--

TO THE BRIDGE!

WE'LL LOSE THEM IN THE CITY!

THIS WON'T BE AS EASY AS I THOUGHT...

RUN!!

TOK

WE'RE **TRAPPED!**

NOW, YOU **BOTH** SHALL **DIE!**

HAD TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER--

LET'S GO, **CHUMP!!**

DO NOT FAIL ME THIS TIME, TACHI!

THIS MADNESS WILL CEASE!!

HEAR ME, DAIMYO ORKAI-- IT IS I, LORD TOSHIRO.

I SPEAK FOR ALL THE PEOPLE HERE, MINE AND YOURS...

YOUR EVIL RULE MUST END. WE ARE WILLING TO DIE FOR THIS CAUSE!

OH, FATHER!!

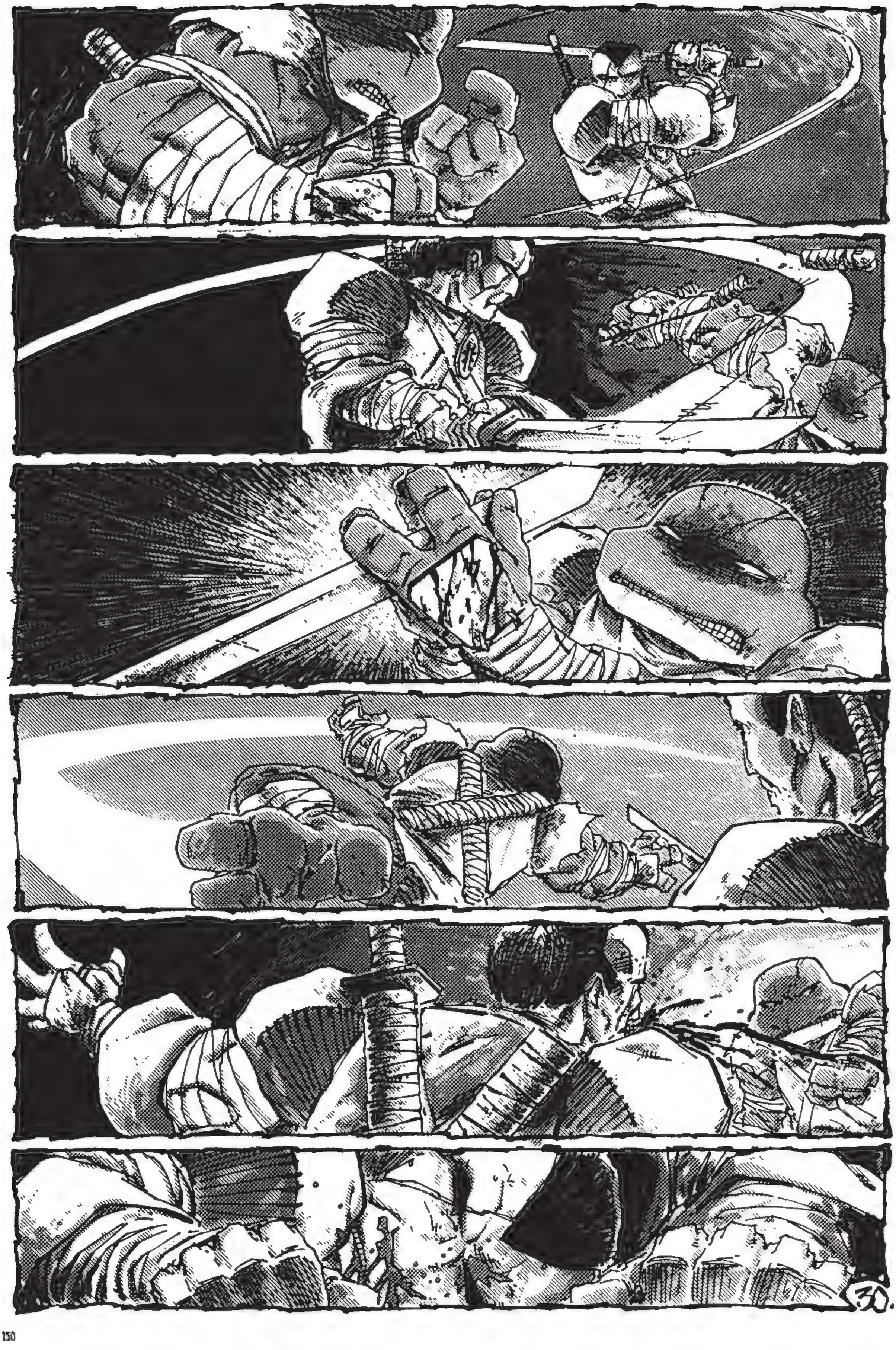
STUPID OLD FOOL-- MY GUARD WILL TEAR YOU TO SHREDS!

TACHI, KILL THEM!!!

I WILL NOT DISHONOR YOU, FATHER--!

SHINK

HAIII!



IT'S OVER, ORKAI.

MY SON--?!

YOU BOTH ARE BANISHED FROM OUR LAND... YOUR RETURN IS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH.

THIS IS OUR LAW... THE PEOPLE'S LAW,

WE ARE FREE OF THE PLAGUE THAT CURSED THIS LAND. AT LAST WE SHALL HAVE OUR PEACE. WILL YOU STAY WITH US?

A MOST PLEASING THOUGHT...

WHY MUST YOU LEAVE? YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH FOR OUR PEOPLE... THEY LOOK UP TO YOU...

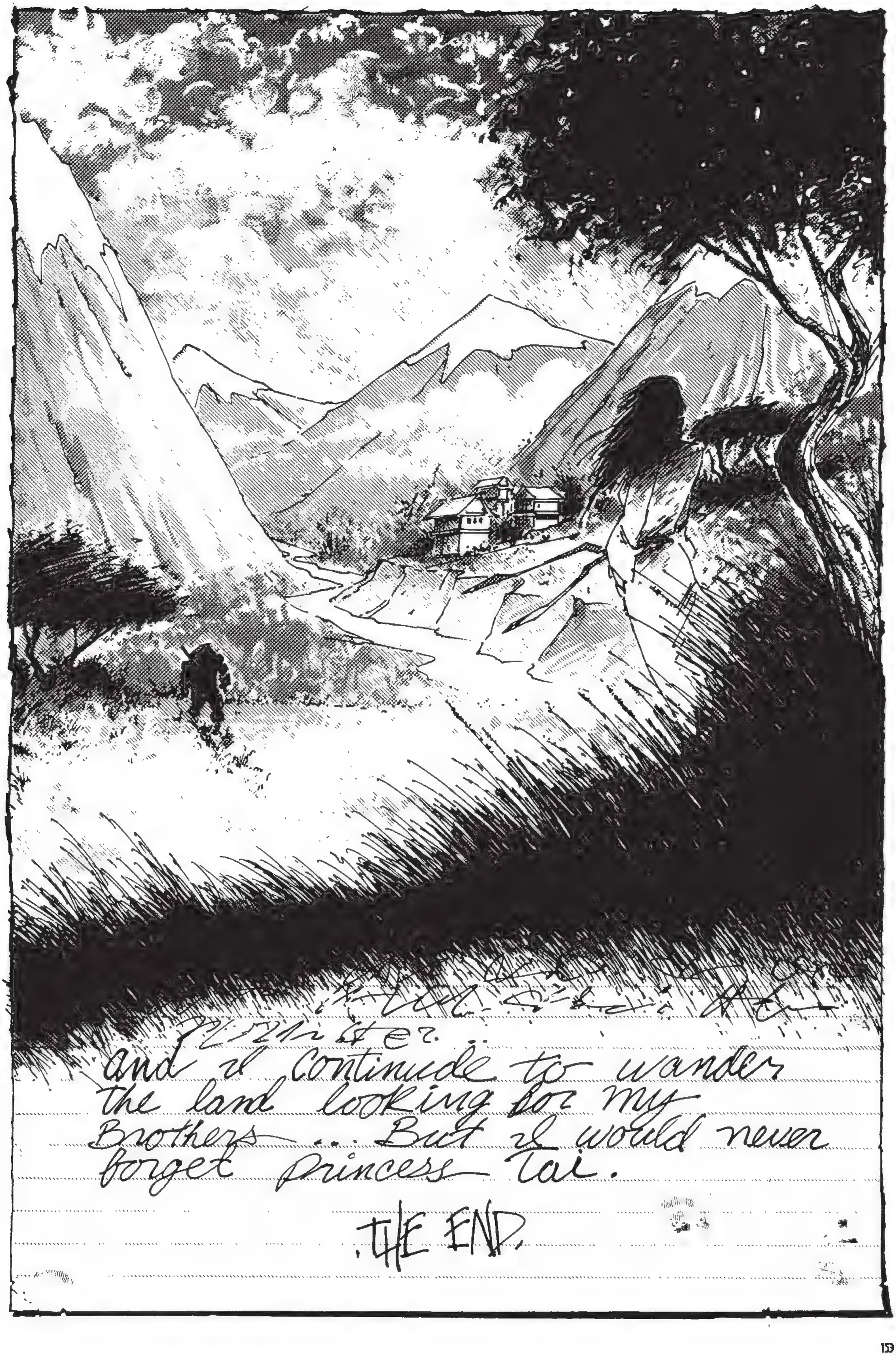
...I LOOK UP TO YOU-- WON'T YOU STAY... PLEASE, FOR ME?

PRINCESS... TAI... I WISH I COULD.

BUT I CANNOT... I MUST KEEP SEARCHING FOR MY BROTHERS.

TOGETHER, WE MUST RETURN TO OUR HOME. I'M SORRY...

I'LL MISS YOU... MICHAELANGELO.



And I continue to wander the land looking for my Brothers ... But I would never forget Princess Tai.

THE END.

I'M OUTTA HERE!

MELTING

EASTMAN-TALBOT

WELL, THAT'S THE STORY SO FAR, WHAT DO YOU THINK KLUNK-- TOO CORNY?

ANNOTATIONS

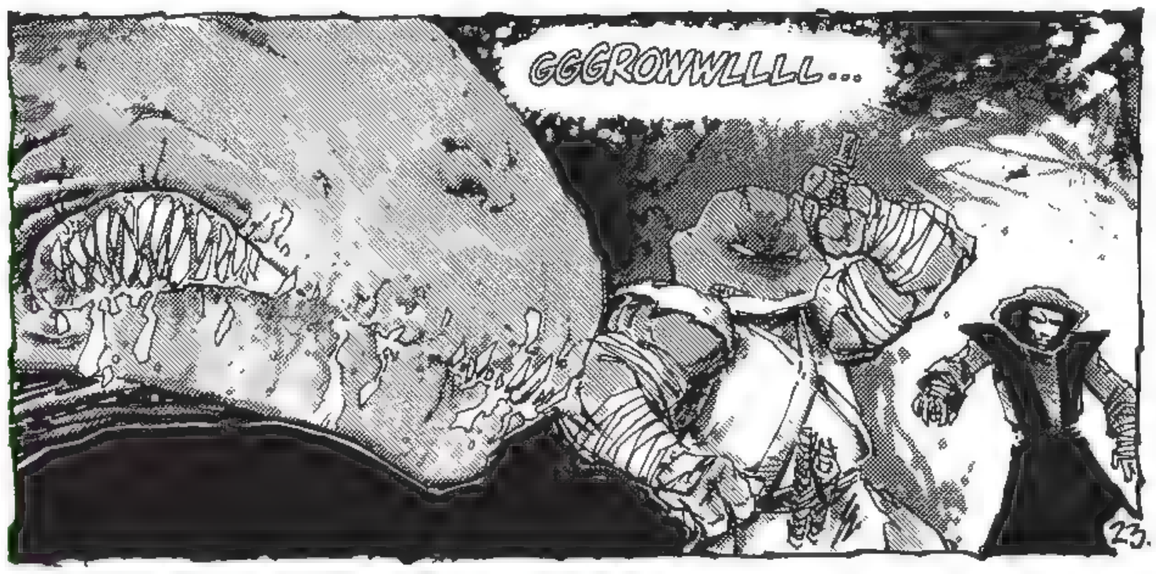
KEVIN EASTMAN

This was a really great story to watch evolve for me, on a few levels. I knew Eric back in Maine; we shared some of the same art instructors in the Portland area, and kept in touch here and there over the years. When the TMNTs exploded, Eric brought some of his new work to show me—as he'd just graduated from the Kubert School—and I was blown away. I suggested we try to find a story we could work on together.

Not too much later he moved down to Massachusetts and we'd jam on some pin-ups and covers, a few short stories, and started talking about some other non-TMNT stuff that would be fun to do—a beast called *Melting Pot*. Then I brought him on board to help me with *TMNT* #14, with the penciling and inking and toning. Around that time I believe he started telling me about this Turtles "period piece" he'd like to do, and how it could be worked into the TMNT world.

I'm not 100% sure where the idea of Michelangelo being a writer came from. Part of me recalls a very distant *TMNT* story, one we even called the final *TMNT* story, that Pete and I had chatted about a few times. It might have been there—but it doesn't completely matter. That story was never finished, but this one was!

Eric gave me some story and script credit, but I think that was being kind in many ways. I think I was more of a cheerleader and sounding board. This was Eric's first full solo effort—and as a full issue, quite the undertaking! Thirty-four pages from start to finish, and he did the pages large. A lot of work went into them and it had it all!



The story was traditional in its style and pacing, but I thought Eric's layout had a lot of graphic charm, and I was always a big fan of his drawing style and duo-shade work. I thought he had a very dramatic take on the TMNT's look and feel, and with this story he really fully embraced all the "Ronin-isms" we both totally dug. To us, Frank Miller was not only one of the most awesome artists out there at the time, but he was also a fellow New Englander (raised in Vermont) so we claimed him as a brother. And, like the rest of the world, we devoured and were inspired by everything he did.

I was very proud of Eric and all the work he did on this story—not only because he wanted to do it, but also because he DID IT! It was a massive amount of work for one guy, the largest single story he'd ever done, including the cover, and he nailed it. I felt a great deal of admiration for my friend, and the well-deserved praise he got for this early piece of TMNT history.

ANNOTATIONS

PETER LAIRD

I have a confession to make, and I hope it won't piss off my good friend Eric Talbot: Until I read this issue for the purpose of making comments on it for these annotations, I had never actually read the whole thing through! (Sorry, Eric.) I'm not entirely sure *why* I didn't read it—quite possibly it had something to do with the insane busy-ness of those days.

I will say this, though—Eric's art in this issue, while not as polished as it is today, really showed that he knew what he was doing. And while their styles are not exactly the same, Eric is very much like Steve Bissette—he *paints* with ink, while most of us (myself included) *draw* with it.

EASTMAN AND LAIRD'S

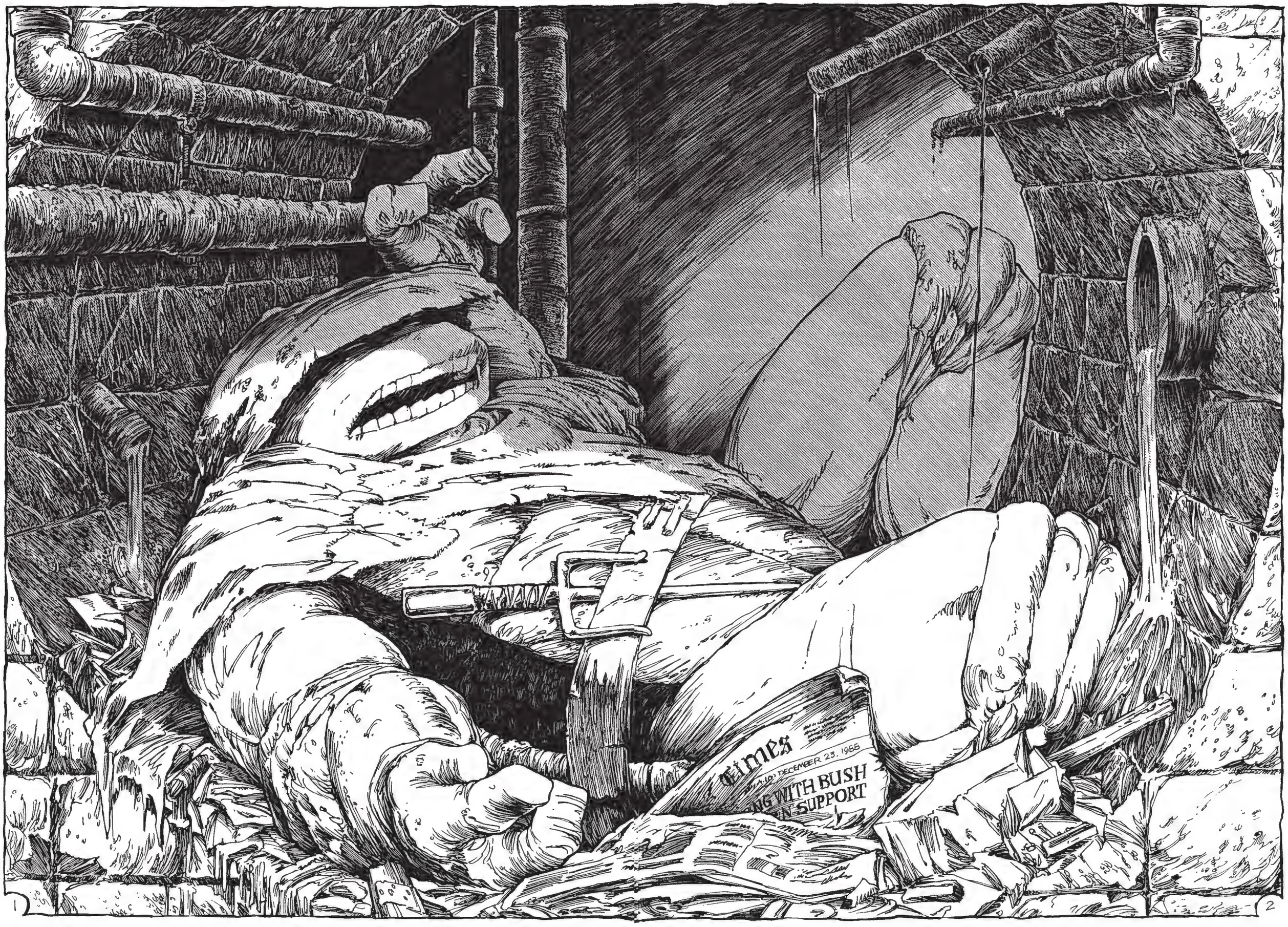
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES®

BOOK 19 MAR. 1989 $1.75 $2.50 IN CANADA

RETURN TO NEW YORK

BOOK ONE

#19


Times
DECEMBER 23, 1988
NG WITH BUSH
N SUPPORT
1
2

BLOOP

BLOOP

DECEMBER 23, 1968

BUS

MBER 23, 19

WITH BUS

UPRO

IS

DAY, DECEMBER

DECEMBER

DECEMBER

NDAY, DECEMBER 19

3

ETTE

I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE...

ITE

I SAID-- I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!

ARE YOU DEAF--?! THIS PLACE IS DRIVING ME CRAZY-- UNDERSTAND?!!

HERE WE GO AGAIN.

NOW LOOK RAPH, WE ALL...

NO...

... YOU LOOK!

IT'S BEEN A YEAR MAN, A WHOLE FRIGGIN' YEAR AND WE'RE STILL STUCK HERE!

THE SHREDDER CAME BACK AND KICKED OUR BUTTS... AND...

LIFE IS GOOD HERE...

...IT'S GIVEN US TIME TO HEAL, TO ACCEPT WHAT'S HAPPENED. LEO'S NEEDED THIS TIME, TOO--

WE'RE NOT THE GUARDIANS OF SOCIETY, RAPHAEL... WE NEVER WERE.

OH BULL-- LISTEN TO YOU GUYS... I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'M HEARING! WE'VE HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME TO-- WHAT DID YOU CALL IT? -- HEAL!

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I WHAT WE HAVE TO DO...

...WE'VE FAILED, DAMMIT-- HOW CAN YOU LIVE WITH THAT?! I CAN'T!

LEO'S LOST IT... HE'S SCARED.

HE CAN NO LONGER LEAD US...

SLAM

WHAT?!!

7

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, RAPH..?

YOU HEARD ME! YOU'RE THE PROBLEM...

...LEO.

THIS SUCKS-- I HATE FEELING THIS WAY!

YOU KNOW WE HAVE TO GO BACK...

...WE'RE DYING HERE, ROTTING FROM THE INSIDE OUT, AND IT'S YOUR FAULT! WE WAIT AND WAIT... AND YET YOU DO ***NOTHING!***

IF YOU WON'T DO THE RIGHT THING-- I WILL!

WISSSSSS

TOK

IT IS NOT YET TIME.

I'LL SAY WHEN... AND THEN, WE GO AS A TEAM.

OH, MAN...

WAP

...YOU MAKE ME **SICK!!**

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE ROSES, BIG BOY... THIS AIN'T NO DUDE RANCH, OR REHAB CLINIC FOR DOWN AND OUT NINJAS. WE'RE HIDING OUT HERE!

NO-- **YOU'RE** HIDING OUT HERE... SCARED TO FACE FACTS...

BAP

...AND YOU'RE DRAGGING ALL OF US DOWN WITH YOU!

BAPP

FUN AND GAMES ARE OVER CHUMP... LOOK AT YOURSELF!

BBAAPP

YOU ARE A **COWARD.**

I'M GOING BACK... ALONE.

THUMP
THUMP
THUMP

WHHSSSSS

I SAID NO...

THUDD

MISTAKE.

KYRAK

WWAP

BAPP

FFAPP

THUP

FUMP

YOU WERE ALWAYS GOOD, LEO...

...ONE OF THE BEST...

...WHICH MAKES LIFE HERE EVEN MORE OF A CRIME.

YOU OWE US, MAN...

...TIME TO START PAYING!

HAUGH

CHUDD

WACK

FUMP

BBAP

WHUDD

EEYAAA

CRUMP

BBASH

STAY DOWN...

CUDD

YEAH, RIGHT!

WACKK

WUDD

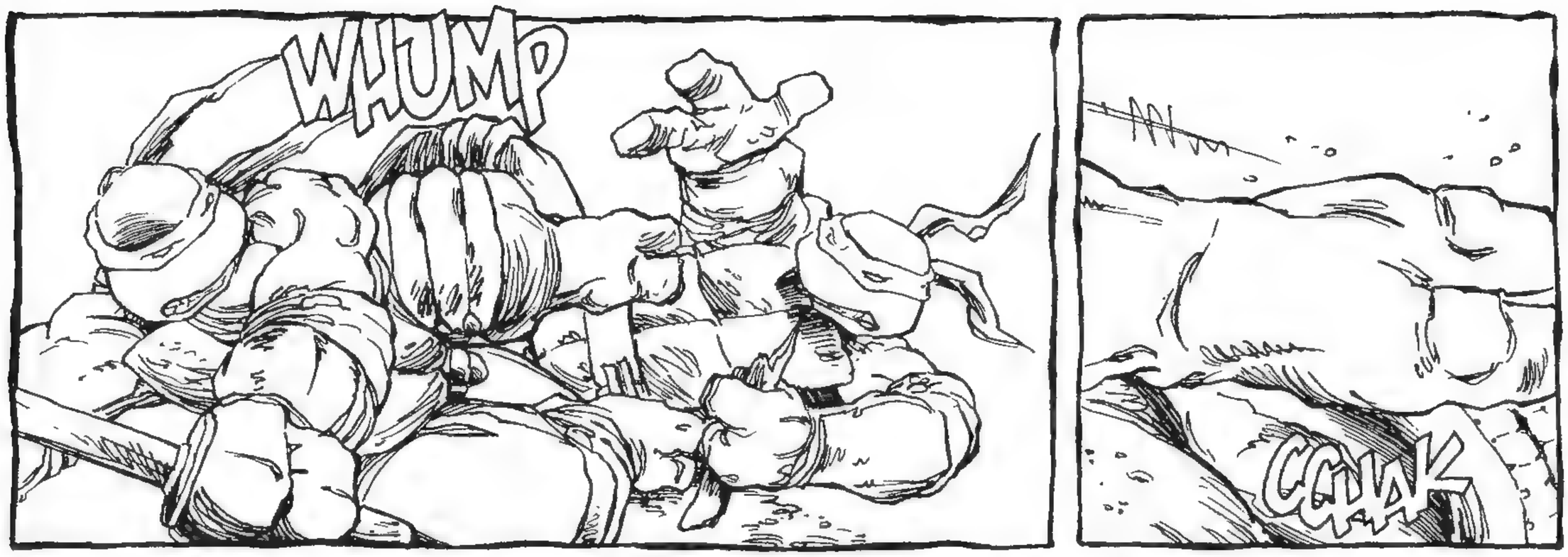
APPRRRRR!

THUMP

NEXT TIME, DON'T USE A WOODEN SWORD...!

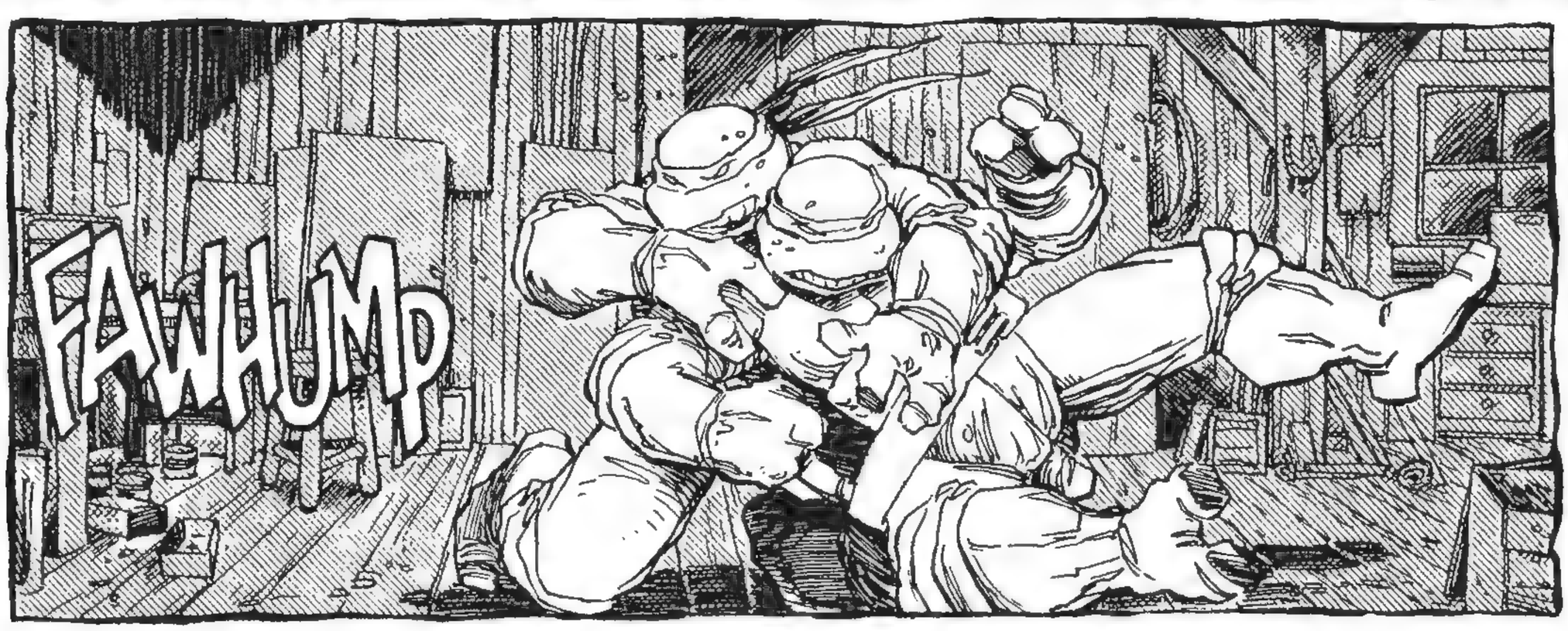
KRAAK

13


WHUMP
CRAK

YOU'RE NOT LEAVING--

--DO YOU HEAR ME?!
BASH
WACKK
CHUD

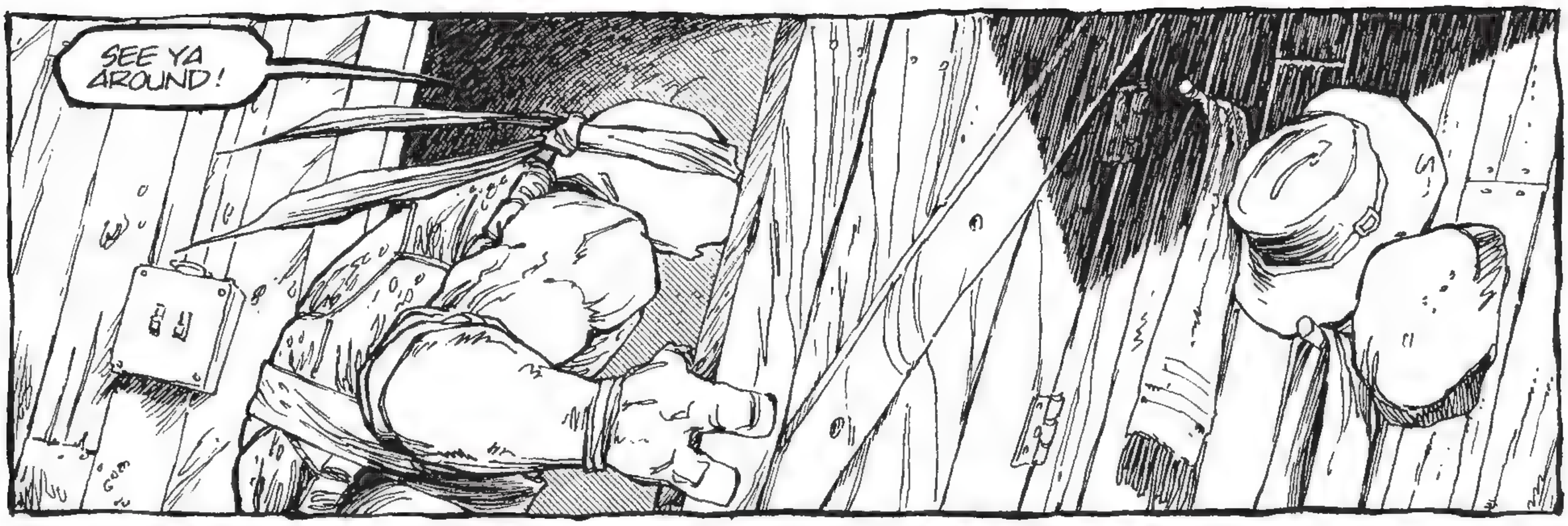

FA-WHUMP

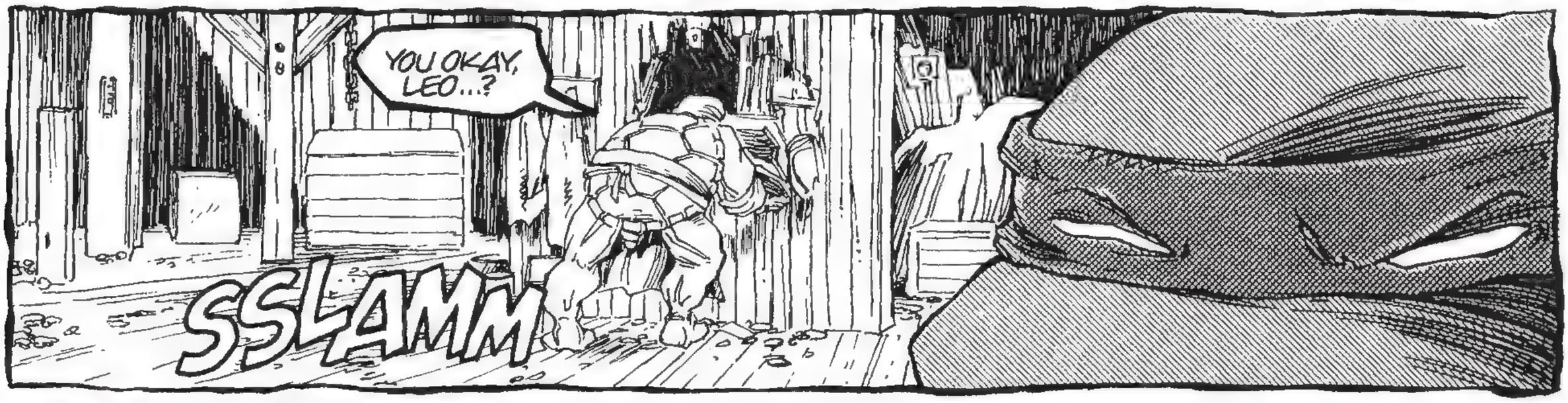
WHUMP
BBRAK-K-K
... GROAN ...

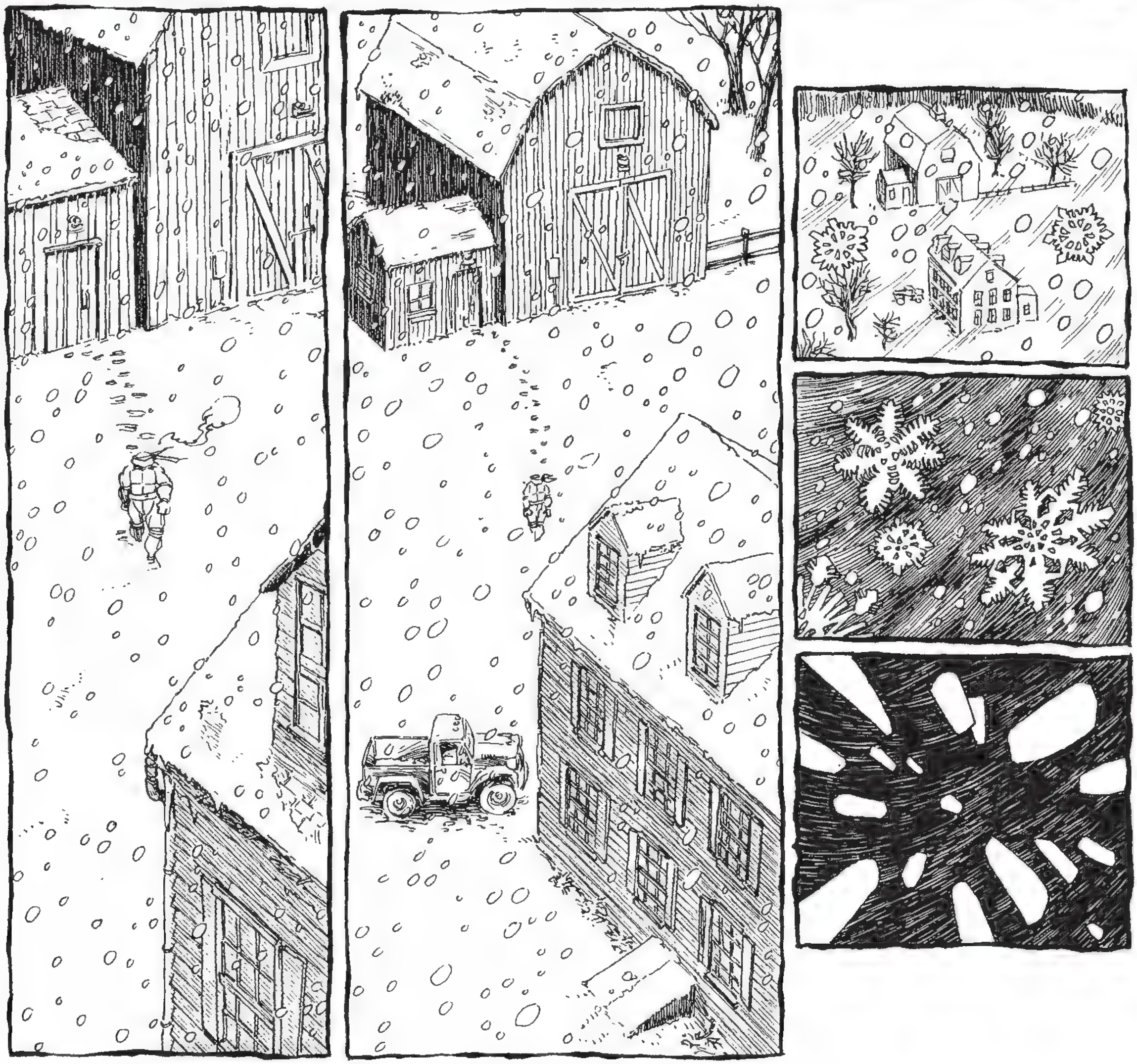
LEO!!

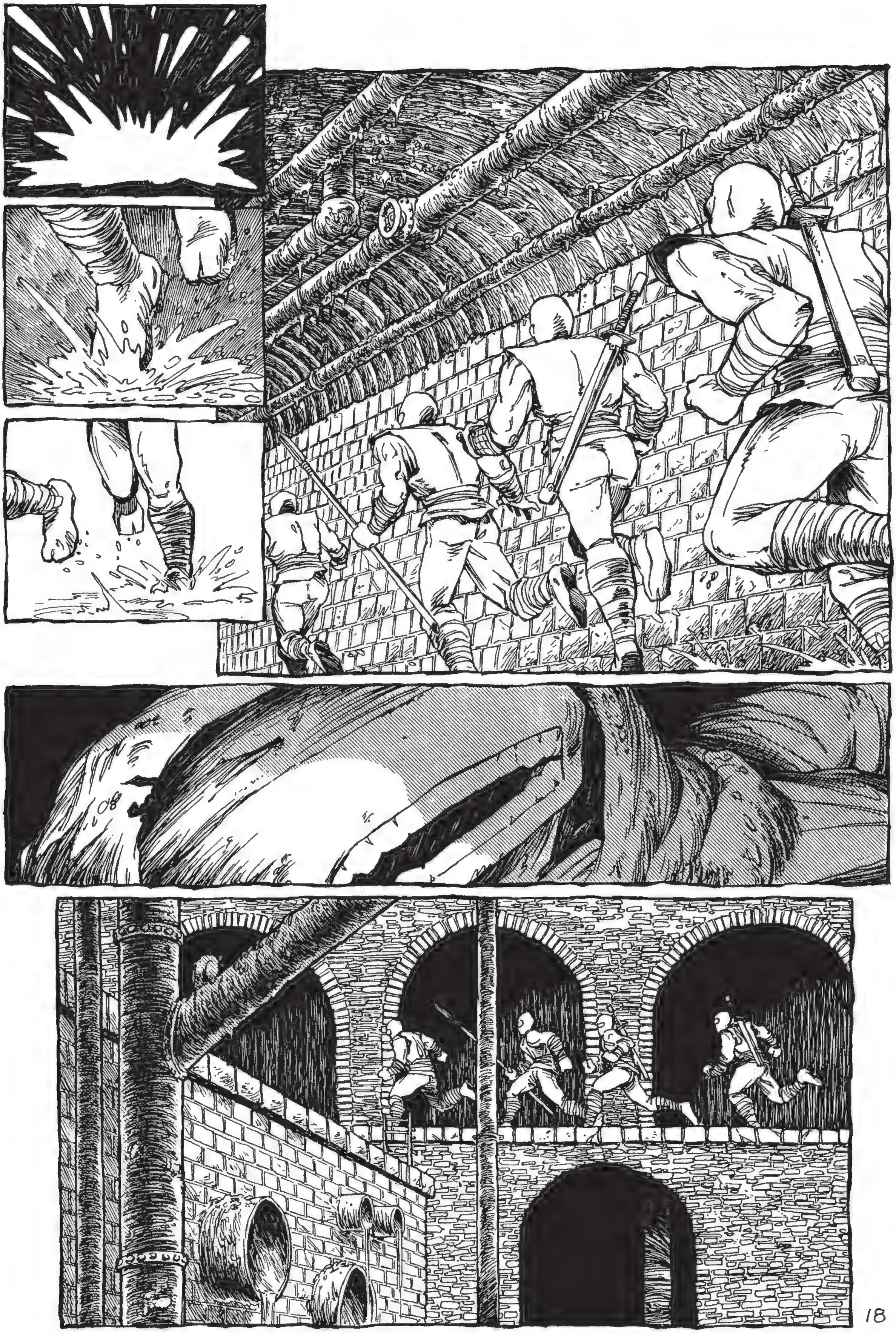
RAPH, WAIT..!

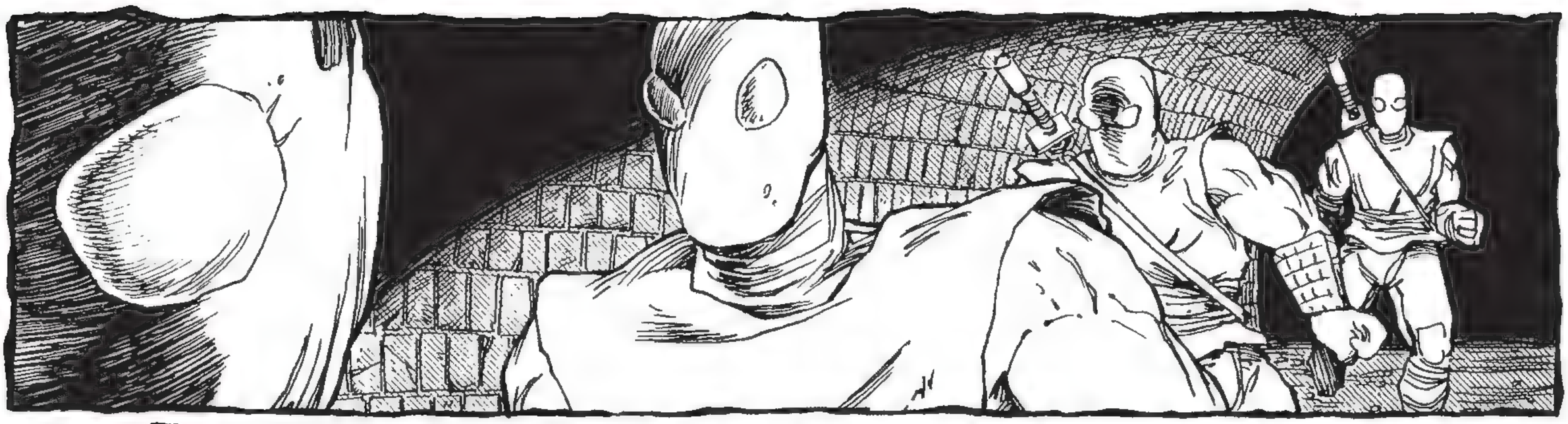
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, MIKE!

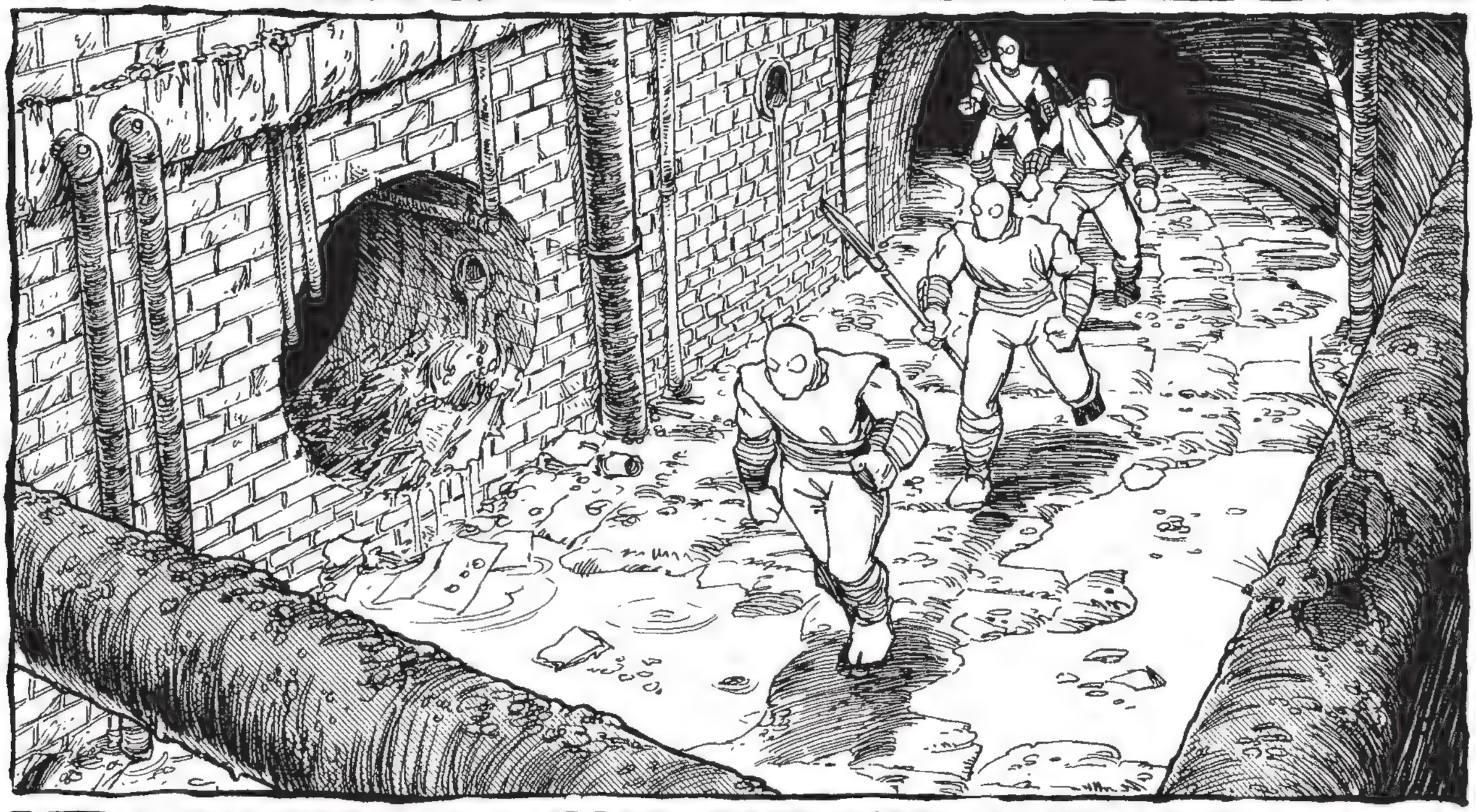

SEE YA AROUND!

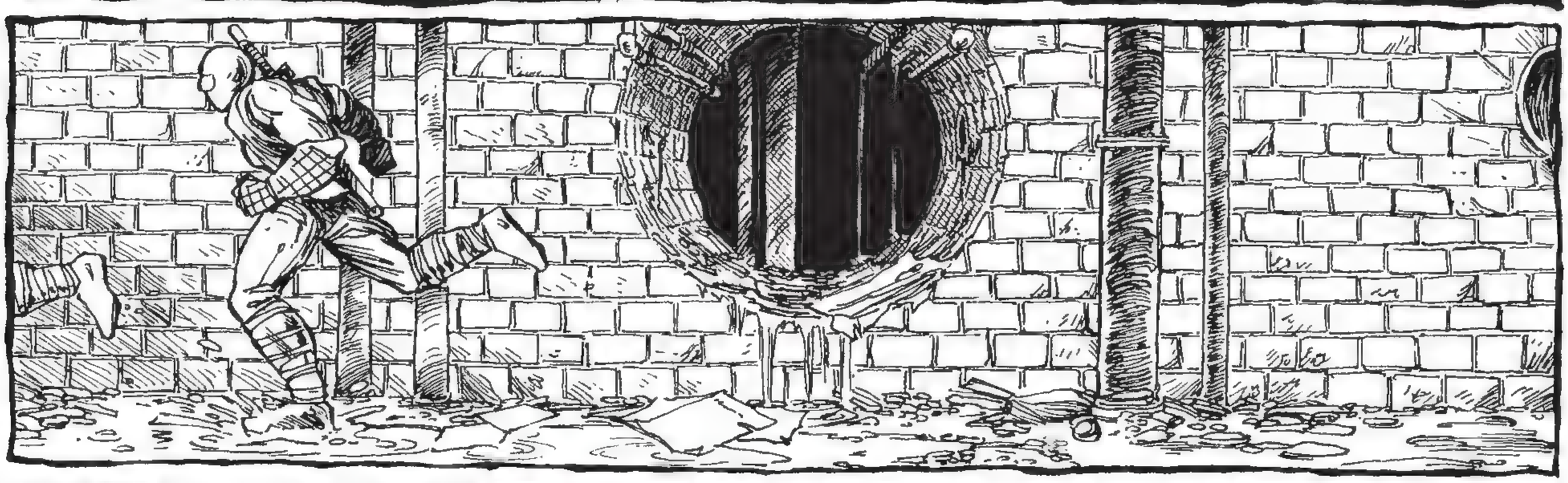

YOU OKAY, LEO...?
SSLAMM

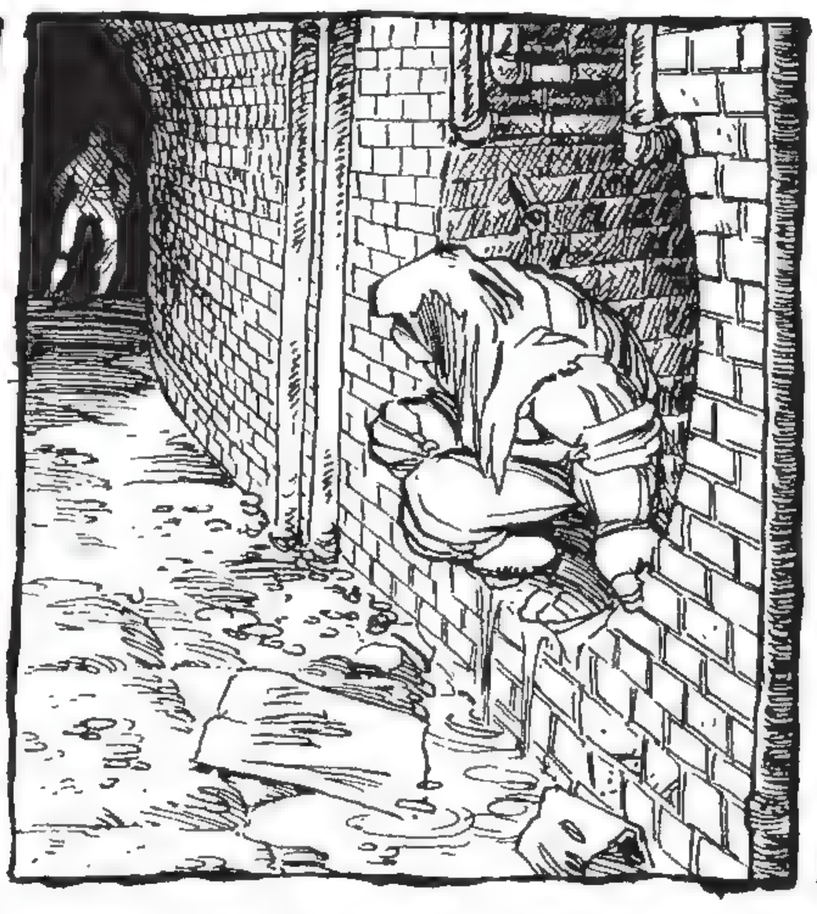












19

20

THUDD

WWHHHSSSSS

SPAK

CHANGG

BRAAK
WHUMP
KRAK
22

THUP

SNAP

RIPP

KANGG

SKAAK

HAH!

YOUR MOVE, SPUD...

23

HEH...

PPD

CRUMP

SHAKK

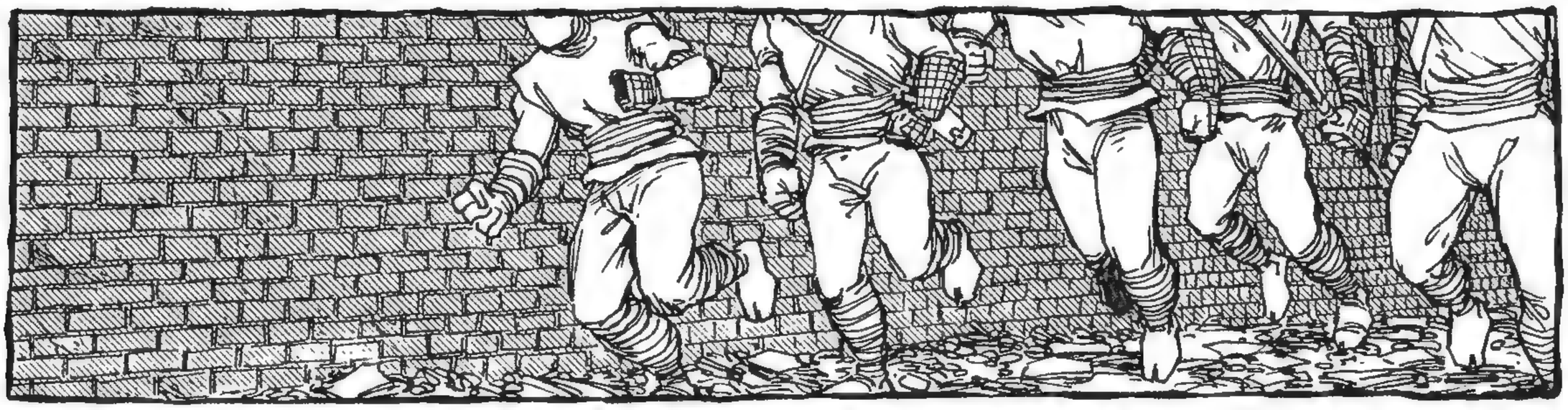
MORE...

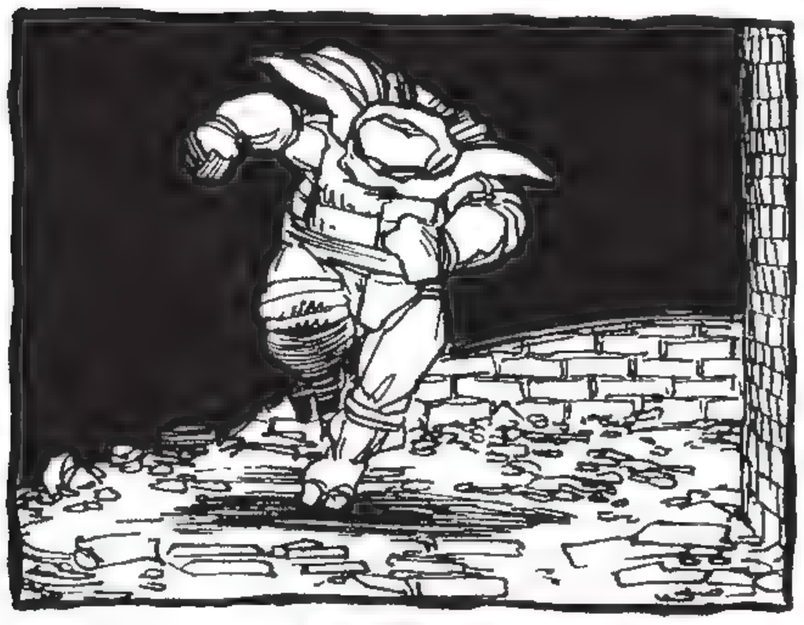
...THIS...

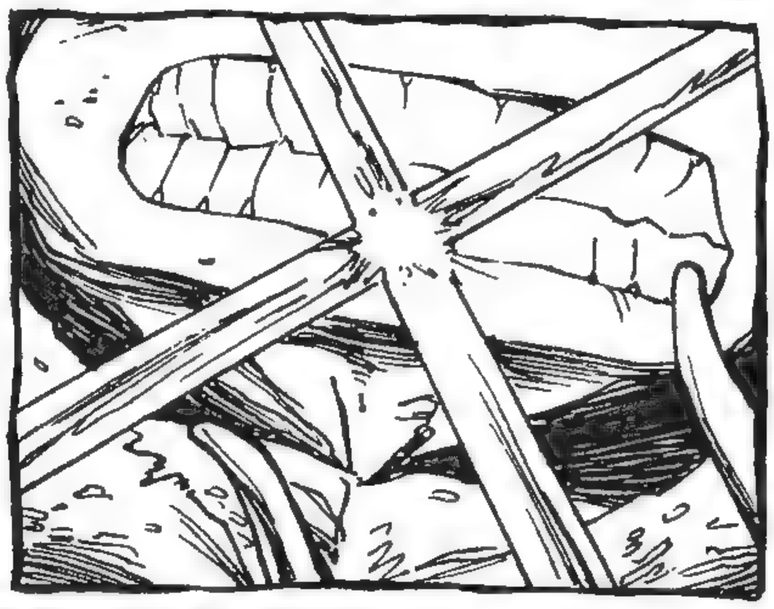
...COMING...

...WAY..!

25







RRAHHGG!

FUMP

WHUDD

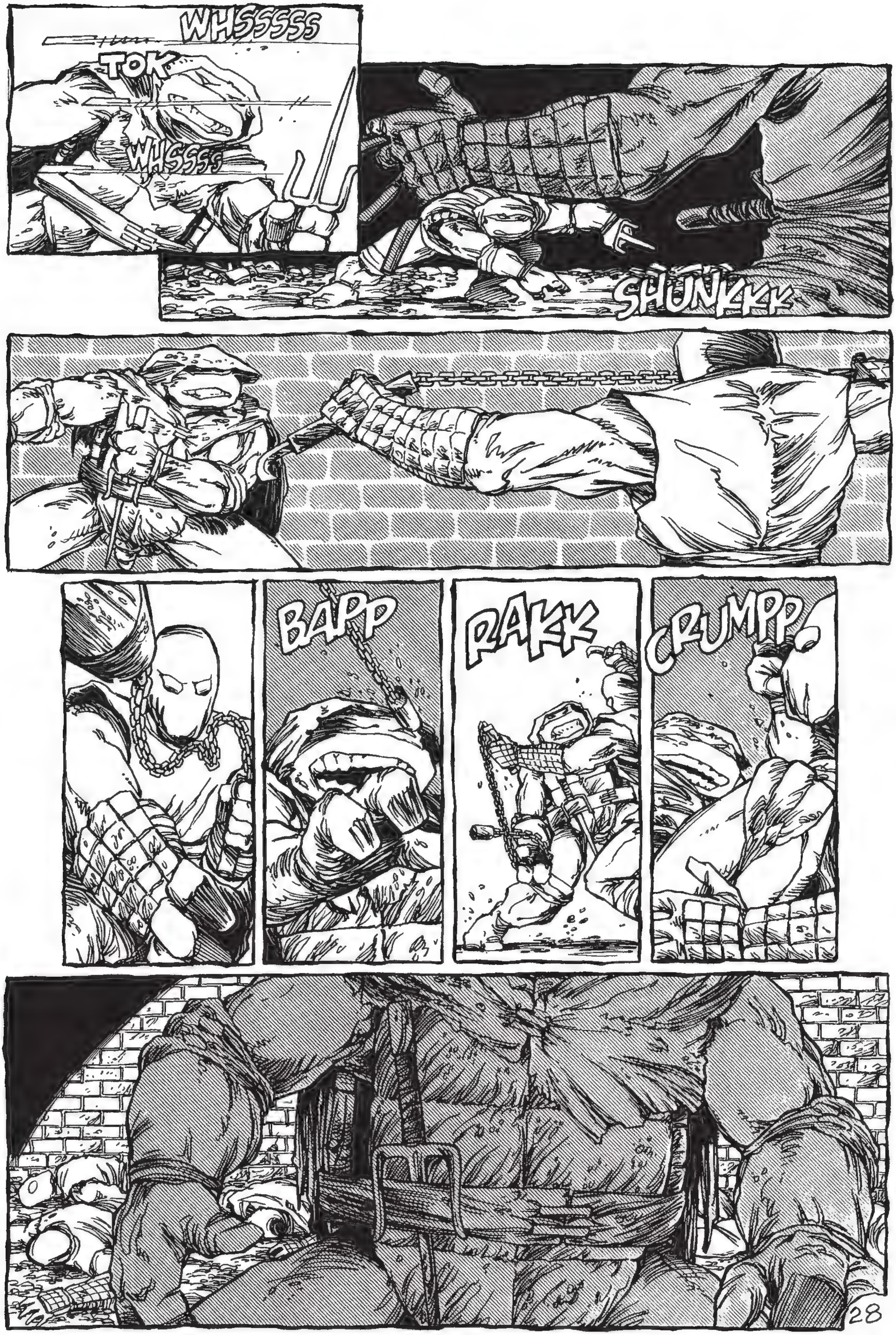
CHAKK

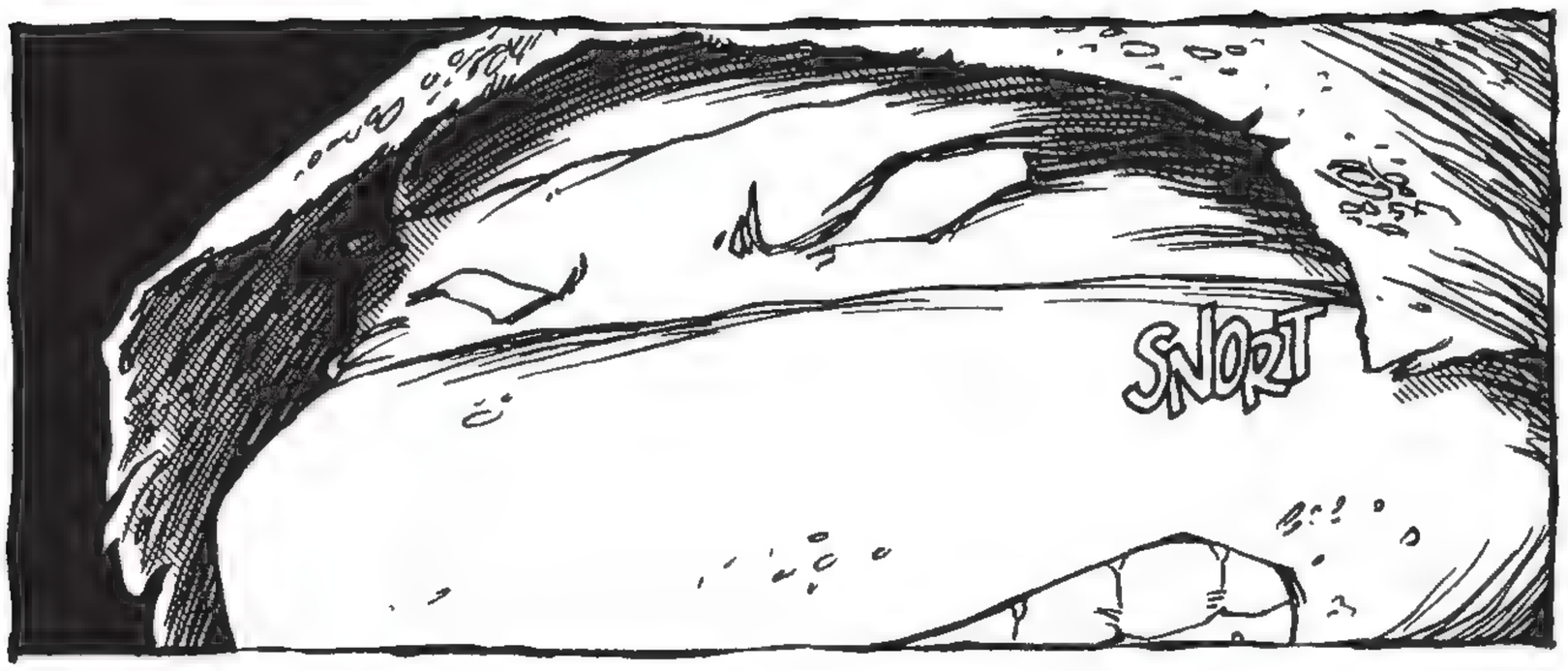
GRUMP

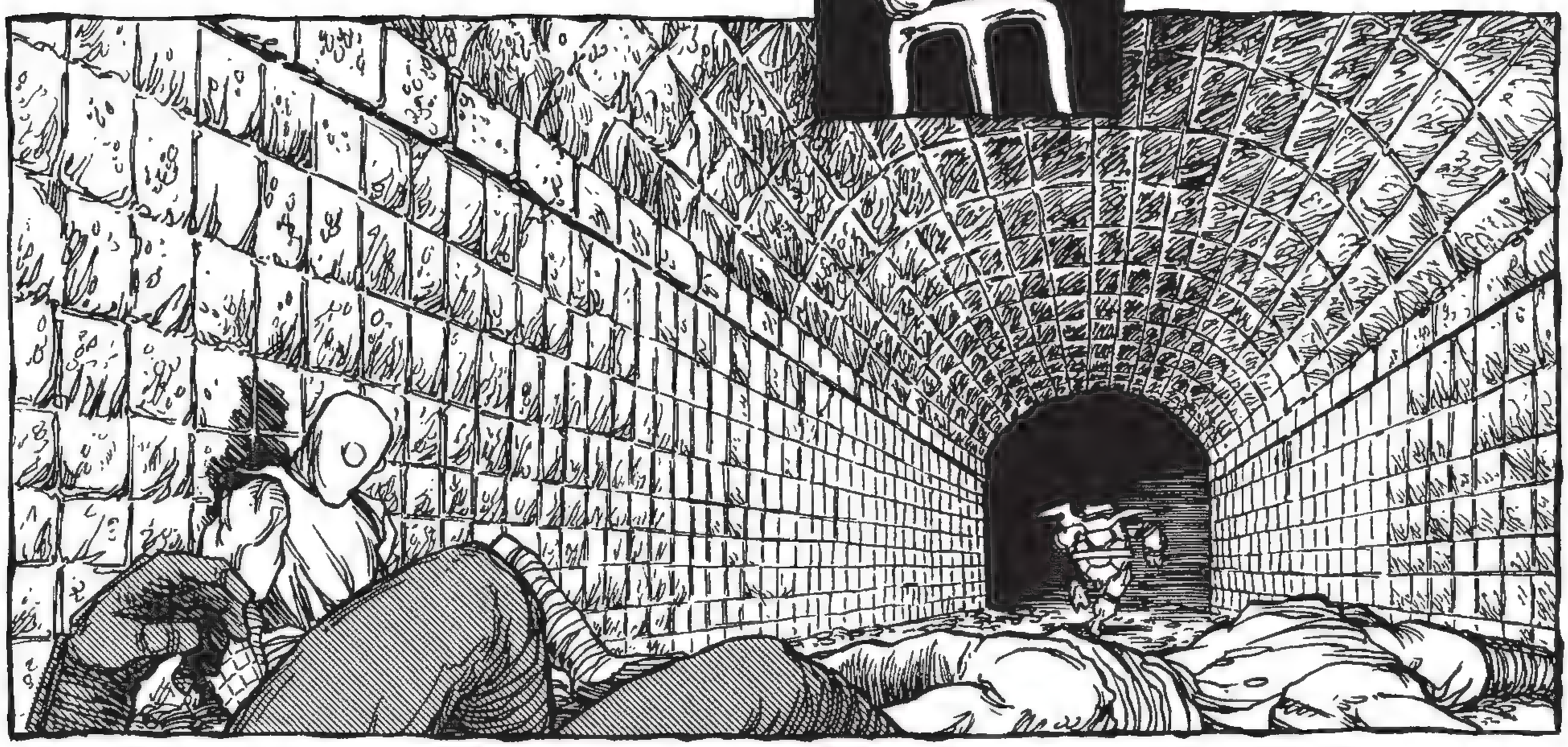
CHUDD

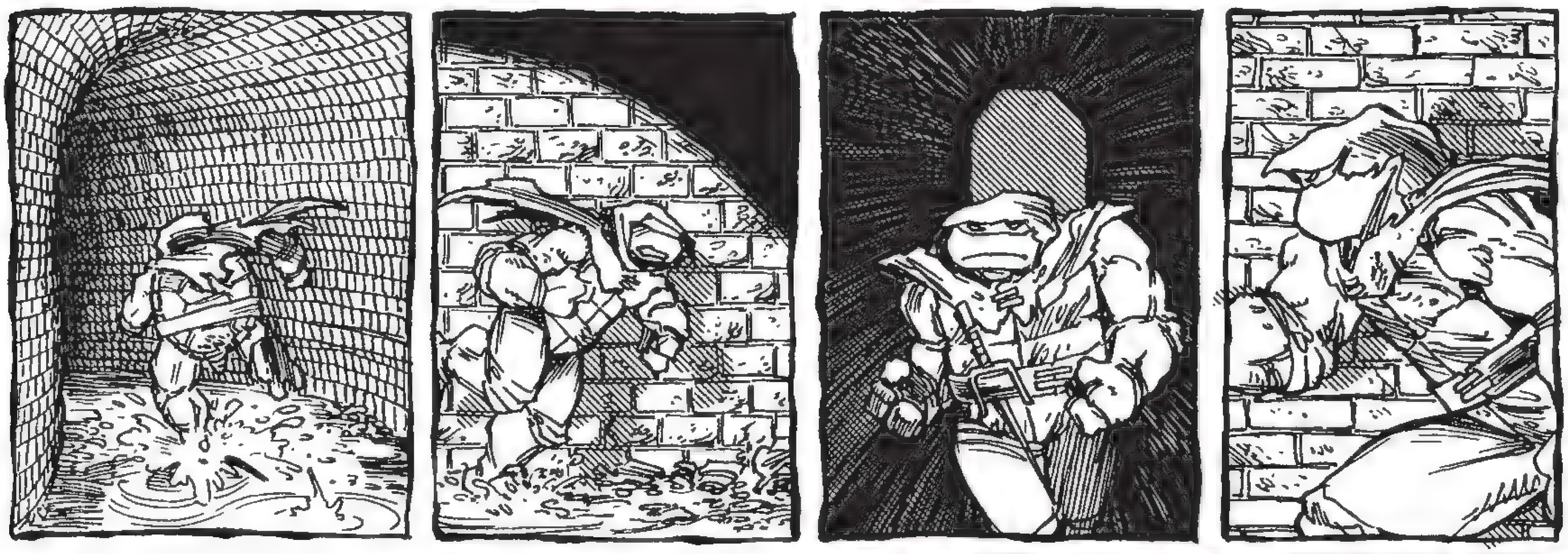
WACKK

RAKK


WHSSSSS
TOK
WHSSSS
SHUNKK
BAPP
RAKK
CRUMPP
28







29

NOT...

...FOOT...

...SOMETHING ELSE.

THAT SMELL...

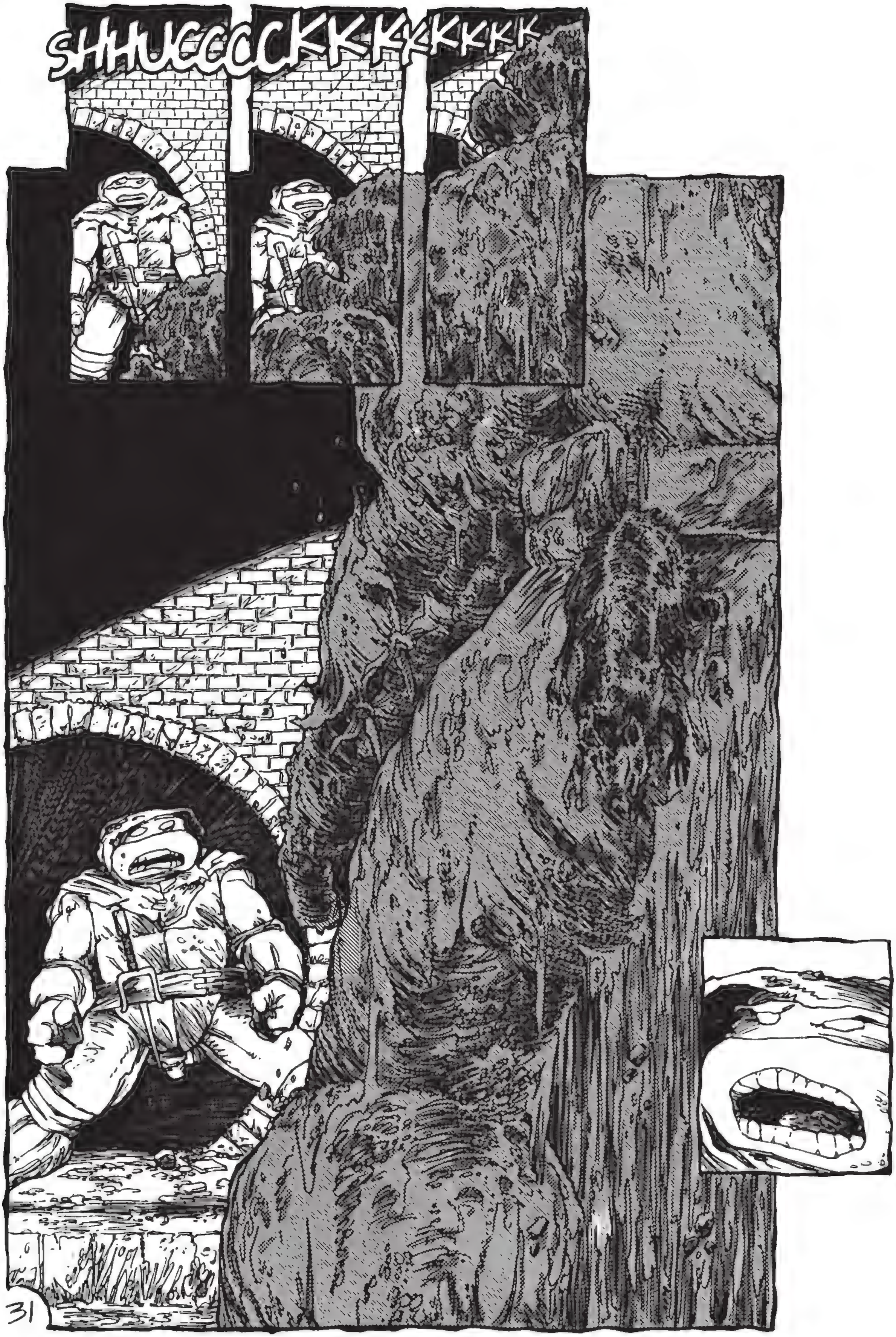
...SO STRANGE...

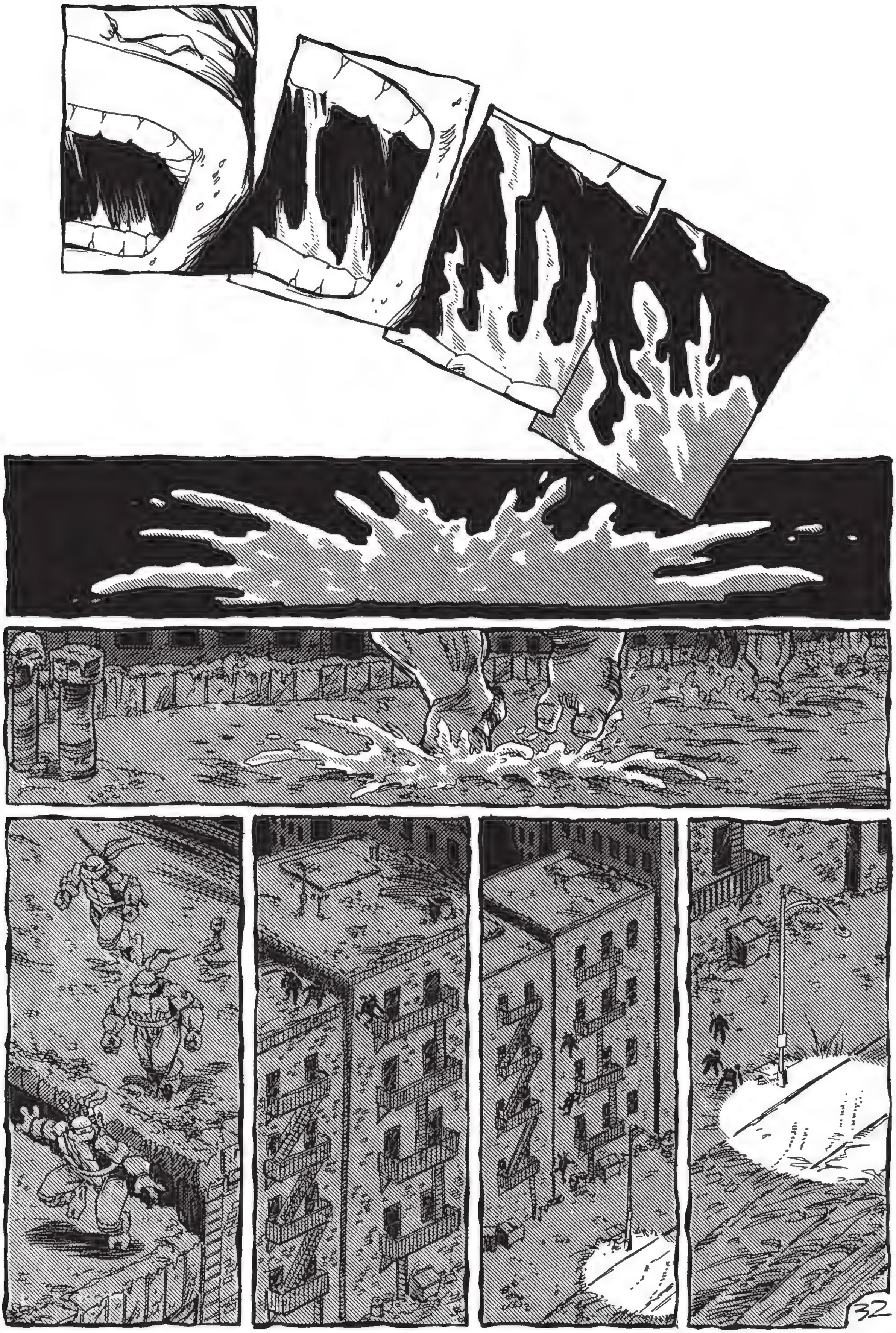
...YET FAMILIAR...

SPUCK

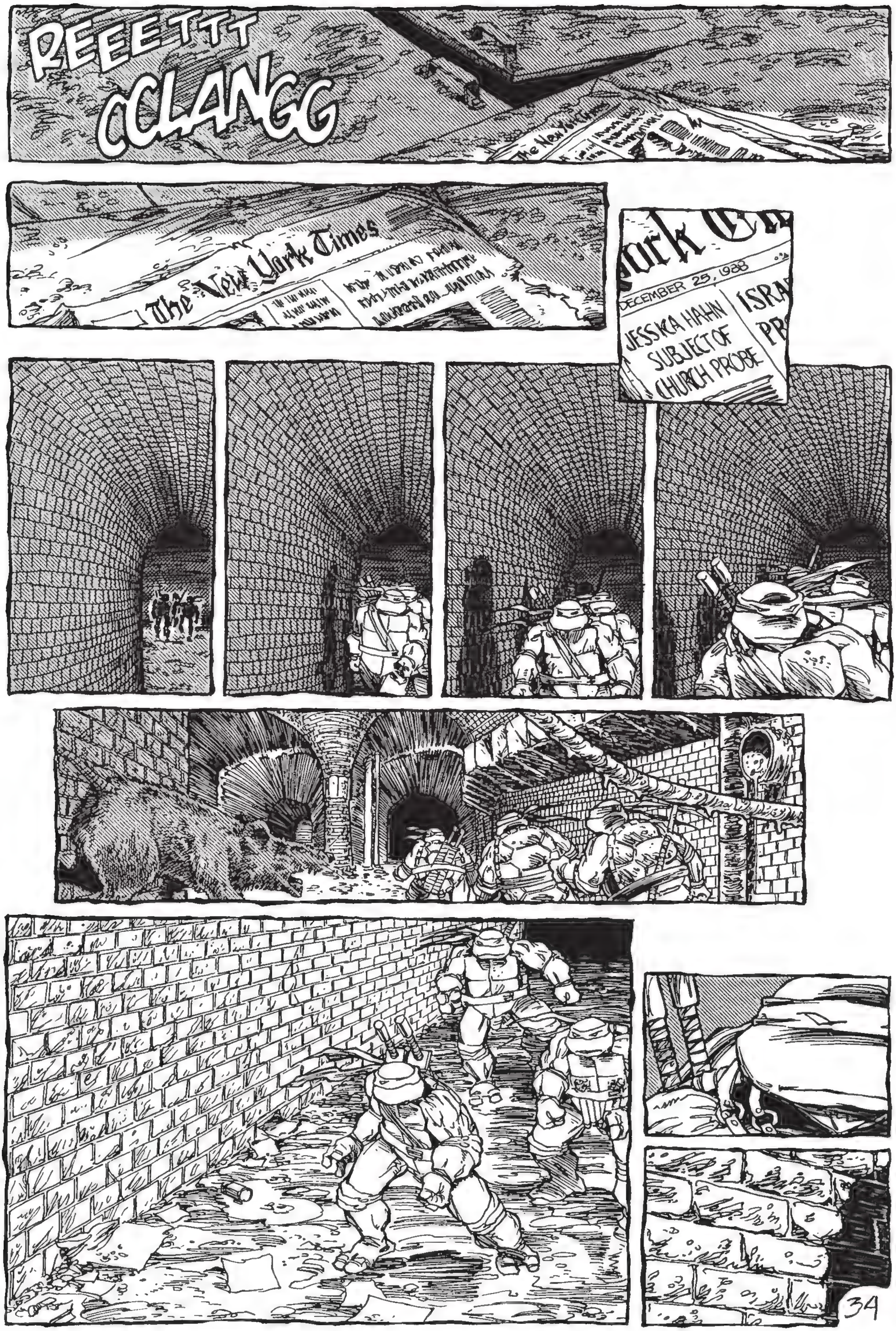
...CAN'T PLACE IT!

BALOOPPP


SHHUCCCCKKKKKKKK
31


32

CHAK
2 HR
PARK


REET TT
CLANGG
The New York Times
The New York Times
DECEMBER 25, 1988
JESSICA HAHN
SUBJECT OF
CHURCH PROBE
ISRA
PR
34

RRREEEEEEEE

SHCCCHK

ISSKRREEEEEE

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

EEETTT

SSKRREEEEEEEE

PACK

WELCOME HOME.

I KNEW YOU'D SHOW UP SOONER OR LATER.

I HAVE A PLAN...

...AND A LITTLE HELP.

36

37
38

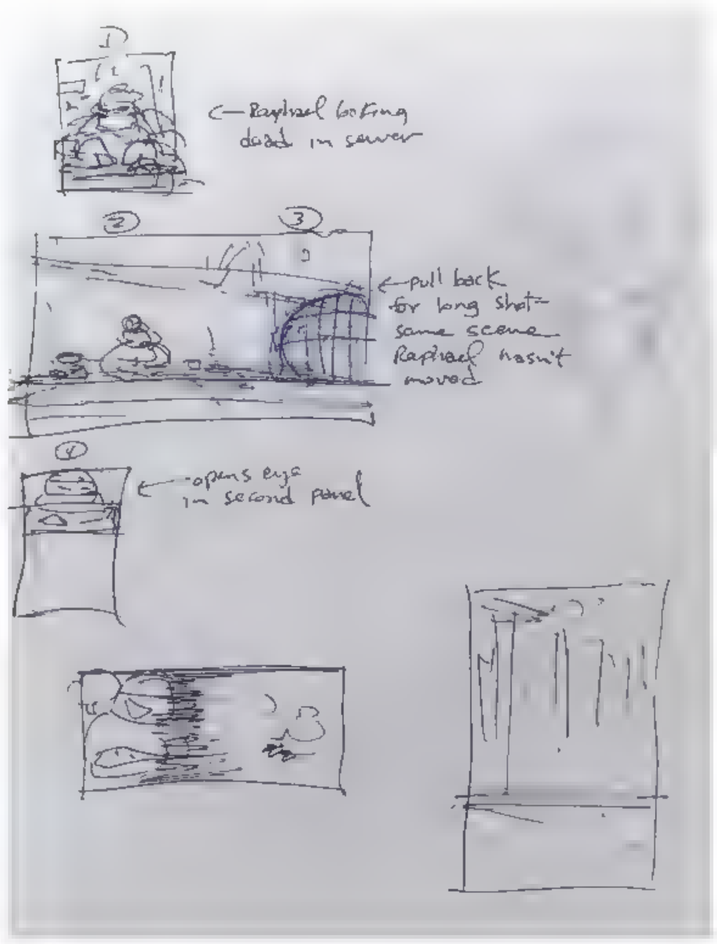
KEVIN EASTMAN

The "Return to New York" was and is one of those multi-level experiences—emotional/personal/story-wise—that even when I look back on it now, spins around my brain. Like, "Which one do I choose from? How to grab a starting point and tell how it all unfolded?"

This was a fan favorite three-issue arc, important at that moment in the storyline of the TMNTs. Little did Peter and I know (or did we?) that it would be roughly another thirty issues before we would work together on the comics again.

Now… let me find a jumping-in point that works.

I might be looking back through rosier-colored glasses than what was really going on, but by this time in the history of Mirage Studios and the TMNTs—the toys were off and running, the cartoon series was going great, and the movie was underway—the chance to work on the comics again on a regular basis had nearly completely faded.



I think the "hands-on artistic" part of the company for Peter and I, at least as far as the comics went, seemed a long way off as the "running the business" side of our creations took center stage. This wasn't so much of a bad thing, running the business side of our creations. I know guys like Jack Kirby—the very people who inspired us to become "creators" would have liked to have had the chance to own and control what they created—and we knew how important it was to have that kind of say in all things Turtles. So when it was there in front of us, we worked together to manage it as best as a couple of guys who loved drawing comics could. And we worked very hard at it.

I feel like jumping into the "RTNY" run was a bit like getting the band back together for one last tour—and we wanted to write some new songs for it. Peter and I both came to the table with ideas we'd been thinking about separately for the series—directions we wanted to take the guys on our own. The joining factor here was that we needed to bring them out of the hills of Massachusetts, back to the streets of NY, and deal with the sudden re-appearance of Shredder in book ten. We once said we'd never do it. After we killed Shredder in issue one we said that we wouldn't bring him back—but the pressure was too great, both internally and externally. We'd already brought him back to center stage for the cartoons, toys, Archie comics, and possibly movie discussions at this point—it was time to deal with it here.

One of the first things I remember about starting the series was Pete's cool idea about bringing Shredder back based on an article he read about these worms that would eat part of another animal and take on a lot of that animals characteristics. Then we added a dash of good old-fashioned Asian Ninja Magic and some classic comic book leap of faith-style storytelling.

I actually think it all worked pretty well.

The other thing I remember clearly was the design aspect to the series. I played around with that more and more on the production side of the books—like the "Cow" end-pages on book #14 and elements of #18 that tied into the whole presentation of that issue. And here I wanted all three to work as a unit. I wanted a very specific cover layout and end pages—with the big meaty forty-page story interiors. And each of the three issues would be big and important to the overall *TMNT* story; three very strong chapters solving some lingering issues, but also creating a platform where we could tell stories from anywhere in the TMNT universe in future issues—from Massachusetts or New York, or anywhere, including any time zone, etc.

So that is what we did.

What I think is also *very* important to mention, before I even get into some of the major story bits, is that Pete and I actually needed to figure out how to get this done. Our daily work schedule managing the TMNT empire was growing consistently. Many of the artists that worked on other Mirage Studios publishing projects were taking on more and more of the TMNT work—everything from packaging the Archie *TMNT* series to designing toys and working on some of the animated shows. So it was decided here it would be the same, that the three issues would be a massive group effort.

Peter and I would write the story and share in the layouts, but for the rest we'd use the entire Mirage village.

Just take the three covers for example. I'm pretty sure I did the layouts and pencils, Pete did the inks, and Steve Lavigne did the colors. For the interiors, both Pete and I liked the idea that Jim Lawson would be the binding element, by doing the pencils for all three books—but I would do the layouts for all of book one, Pete would do all of book two, and we'd each do different parts of book three. Then Pete would ink book one, Eric Talbot book two, and I would ink book three…

This could have easily been a perfect recipe for disaster, but I think it worked out very well.

Issue #19 was the set-up and the getting-them-there issue, and we had some great ideas here. Raphael was of course front and center as the "spark that sets it all off." He would not only be the first to get bored with the country living, but the first to get the rest of them wanting to get back to dealing with life, their honor, and most of all, Shredder. The big nasty part of their past who came back and drove them out of the city—out of their home, and into the hills to hide. It was time to grow up and become men. To face their destiny, so to speak.

Which is one of the key reasons we pretty much left Splinter, April, and Casey completely out of this run. It had to be simply focused on just the four of them—reconnect everything, and reconnect all of them. Maybe Pete and I were looking for a little reconnection as well.

Starting with Raph and Leo having a face off—who's the real leader?—had kind of always been there. But this time we put it front and center. And Raph is so angry by the time it starts, Leo hasn't really got a chance—all he's trying to do is contain the explosion and keep the group together. But the more he tries to control it, without dealing with the Shredder issues, the further it fractures.

So Raph starts it and heads off to the city solo— starts kicking some Foot Soldier ass—and the others follow, showing up at the end. But not before Raph has made a new friend—a Pete Laird idea I believe—where one of the Triceratons who came back with the guys in book #7 has survived, and has been living in the sewer ever since. Half crazy from the effects of our atmosphere, he's now following Raph like a two-ton puppy dog. A simply awesome visual.

ANNOTATIONS

PETER LAIRD

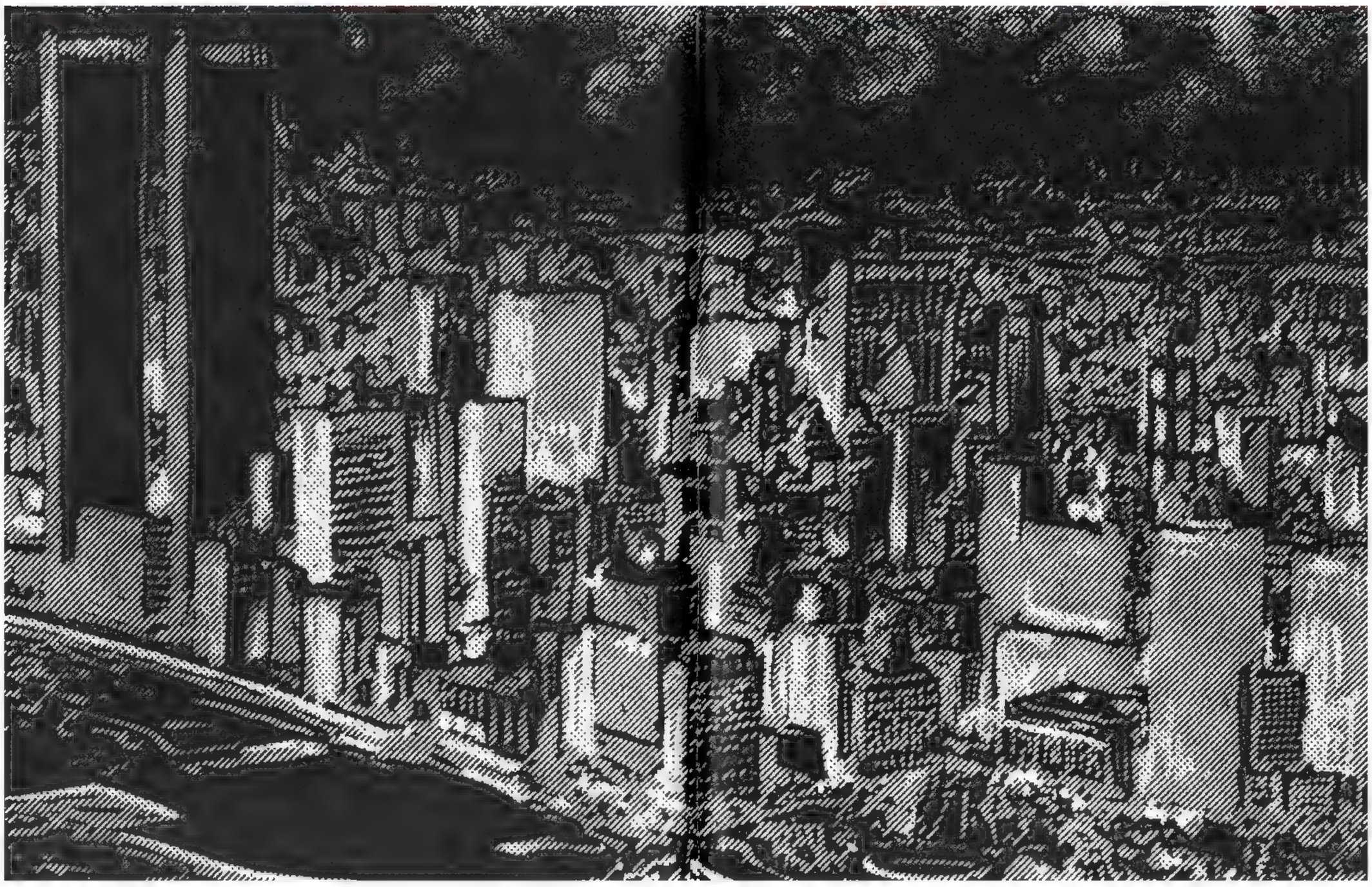
This is the first issue of the three-issue "Return to New York" story arc, perhaps the most tightly-plotted sequence of *TMNT* issues that Kevin and I ever did. Well, maybe the longer "City at War" arc is… but they're close.

Anyway, I think these three books marked the last time that Kevin and I would work on *TMNT* comics together until "City at War."

I remember that working on the covers for these three issues was fun. Kevin penciled them, I inked them (all with brush, as I recall) and Steve Lavigne painted them. I don't remember whose idea it was to design the three covers so that they maintained a visual consistency, with the inset painted art and grey borders, but I think they're some of our best covers ever. It is also worth noting that unlike past issues, where we tried to make the best use of the space on the back cover, either for an ad or for part of the cover image when we were in our "wraparound cover" phase, the covers for these three issues are just blank grey, with a small Mirage Studios logo being the only decoration.

The interiors are unusual in that we split up the work in different ways for each one. This issue, #19, was laid out by Kevin, penciled by Jim Lawson, and inked by me. Issue #20 was laid out by me, penciled by Jim Lawson, and inked by Eric Talbot. And issue #21 was laid out by both me and Kevin, and inked by Kevin. Steve Lavigne lettered all three issues.

The frontispiece—a view of New York City—was done by me, if memory serves. I think what I did was take a photo I'd found and make several generations of copies of copies of it on our copy machine, to make it more contrast-y, and then added a little ink and Wite-Out in spots to bring out certain features.



ANNOTATIONS

Pages 1–2: Each issue of this three-issue series opened with a two-page spread. As sharp-eyed readers might realize, I inked this book with the same tool with which Jim Lawson inked issue #15—a fine-point Tombow marker. I don't know if I achieved the same level of artistry that Jim did when he inked over my pencils, but I do recall that it was a lot of fun (as well as a lot of work—look at all those freakin' *lines!*) I think this opening scene came out really well.

I should also note that I think Kevin may have hit his high point in the layouts he did for this issue. They are as good as, if not better than, anything I've ever seen in comics, in my opinion. And I would be remiss if I did not mention that Jim took those layouts and did some beautiful penciling.

Page 3: All of these panels are nice, but I especially like the way, in those four small panels at the bottom of the page, that the *New York Times* newspaper logo fades into the logo of our local Northampton newspaper, the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, shifting the scene from the grungy sewer pipe Raphael is in to the farmhouse in Northampton.

And I just realized that one of the cool things about the way Kevin did these first few pages is that the reader doesn't yet know the where, why and what of these images of Raphael. Is he asleep? Dead? In New York? In Northampton? Wherever he is, *why* is he there? And then, to compound the mystery and add the confusion of "when," there's Raphael on the next page, grousing to his brothers. What's going on?

Page 4: Raphael's slumped pose in the sewer pipe in the opening of this issue is echoed by his posture on this page. I like the way that on this page and the next, both Mike and Don ignore his grumblings and go on with what they are doing. It's a nice little subtle bit illustrating their relationship as brothers.

Page 5: I love Don's line in panel five: "Here we go again." And his expression… you can almost imagine him shaking his head at yet another of Raphael's blowups.

Page 6: I like how Jim slipped in a Norton motorcycle poster hanging over Donatello's workbench. I also like Don's line to Raph in the fourth panel:

"We're not the guardians of society, Raph… we never were."

…because it's one of the things that I kept running into over the years when dealing with people with whom we got involved when working on various TMNT projects in other media, like animation and movies—almost always, they saw the Turtles as stereotyped superheroes, going out on patrol like Spider-Man to stop crimes and such. I never saw them that way. Not that the Turtles wouldn't stop, or try to stop, an obvious crime if they happened upon it, but they never went out and actively looked for that kind of trouble.

Pages 7–16: The confrontation and hand-to-hand fight between Raphael and Leonardo is brilliant in the way Kevin laid it out, and it was cathartic in a way—something that we all expected to happen at some point, and it was good to get it over with. My one gripe about this wonderful sequence is that for a lot of it, you can't tell which Turtle is which! It might have been a good idea to give one of the two Turtles something different—maybe have one of them not wearing his bandana—so that it would be easy to see who was doing what to whom.

But that's a minor point.

Pages 17–18: I like the very cinematic pull-back in the bottom half of page 17, with the farm disappearing into a swirl of snowflakes, which then segues into water splashing under the feet of a troop of Foot ninja running through the sewers in three similar small, squarish panels on the top left hand side of page 18.

Page 18 is also the beginning of what I think of as "brick hell"—Jim drew so many panels with hundreds of bricks in them, and I felt obliged to ink them all in.

That was a LOT of bricks.

Page 20: I always liked the little bit in the fifth panel with the last Foot ninja turning his head to look behind him—a nice, subtle bit of storytelling by Kevin to make it clear that, as stealthy as Raph thought he was being, he still made enough noise to alert at least this particular Foot ninja… and that leads to the ambush and battle which starts on page 21.

Pages 21–28: I think Kevin really enjoyed doing these fight sequences, and this one is particularly brutal as Raph goes off on this group of Foot ninja, taking them all out by himself in deadly fashion. Great pacing and design of the panels.

Page 31: Did we give away too much in those three small panels at the top of the page? Is the distinctive Triceraton frill too obvious? I can't be sure.

Page 32: In the top half of this page, there's another nice segue from the saliva between Raph's teeth (as he reacts, open-mouthed, to the presence of what we soon find out is the Triceraton Zog) and the splashing of the other Turtles' feet in the slushy snow atop some apartment buildings in New York.

Pages 35–36: I think it's cool that the look of the entrance to the Turtles' old underground lair is kept pretty consistent here with the way it was drawn in the first issue.

Pages 37–38: I like this very dramatic, albeit wordless, two-page spread. Of course, I also liked the fact that with this issue, we brought back one of the Triceratons, who were favorites of mine.

EASTMAN AND LAIRD'S

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES®

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RETURN TO NEW YORK

BOOK TWO

#20

WEEZEE...GOOD... ZOG KNOWS...

...ZOG KNOWS ALL... SURPRISE 'EM... IN AND OUT.. KUFF, HACKHH... PRISONERS? ..HEH...NO.

ZOG HAS BEEN WATCHIN' 'EM, SEE'S 'EM CREEPIN'... ZOG KNOWS...

...KNOWS ALL.

TEETH, SHARP, SHARP, TEETH... EVERYWHERE! HHAAUGHKK... THEY HIDE, CREEP... QUICK...

YES, SIR, GOTTA WATCH 'EM-- THEY'RE QUICK!

QUICK... HEKH, HEKH,...ZOG KNOWS.. KOUGEH! HAAGHK!

3

QUCK, QUICK... QUCK, LIKE... KKAFF BALACLAVS... CREEPING... KILL YOU QUICK, LOST MANY BROTHERS THERE... HHHAUGHKK!

WE GOTEM THO'... HEKH, HEKH... TOTAL DESTRUCTION... LIKE... KOUGH... HERE...

STRIKE FIRST... HEKH, HEKH, HACKKKH... DIVERSION...

SOF'N 'EM UP... WWHEEZE... WAIT FOR THE FLEET...

HEKH, HEKH, OPEN THE DOOR...

...ZOG KNOWS.

4

THIS IS INSANE...

THE DOOR... YESSS...

WHAT IS IT?

YESSS... HERE!

WE HAVE THEM... HEKH, HEKH!

TTHAA

BBOOMM

GGRAAAHHHHH!

HE'S FOUND SOMETHING!!

LET'S HAVE A LOOK--

FOOT!

THIS IS IT!!

6

LOOKS LIKE A COMMUNICATIONS CENTER--!

FAN LEFT-- WATCH THE CROSSFIRE!

...DON'T BUNCH UP!

PICK YOUR TARGETS... WHACKK, WACKK... MOVE IT... GRUNTS!

NO YOU DON'T--!

7.

ZOG--STOP... IT'S OVER!

TAKE NO PRISONERS!!

TAKE NO--

ZOG!!

COMMANDER ZORAPH...HUGGAARR.. PERIMETER SECURE SIR! AWAITING FURTHER... KAHFF KAGGHF--ORDERS!

AT EASE, TROOPER... YOU DID... WELL. STAY SHARP, AND KEEP WATCH.

I WOULDN'T HAVE BELIEVED IT... BUT HE'S LED US TO ONE OF THE MAIN FOOT CONTROL CENTERS. THEIR ENTIRE NETWORK COULD BE LAID OUT HERE...LET'S SEE IF I CAN ACCESS THE RIGHT FILES...

HERE WE GO... LET'S SEE WHAT WE GOT. HMM... LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE GOT OUTPOSTS LIKE THIS THROUGH-OUT THE CITY, ALL LEADING TO SOME SORT OF MAIN OPERATIONS COMPLEX.

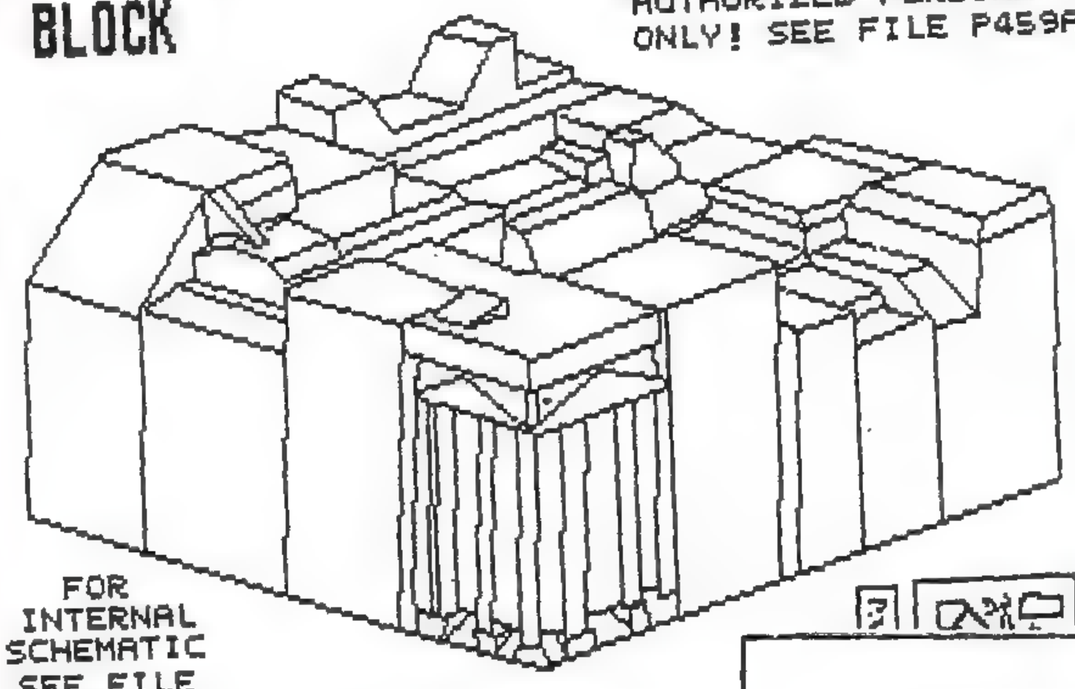
CAN YOU GET AN EXACT LOCATION?

WORKING ON IT...

CHECK THIS, OUT LEO--

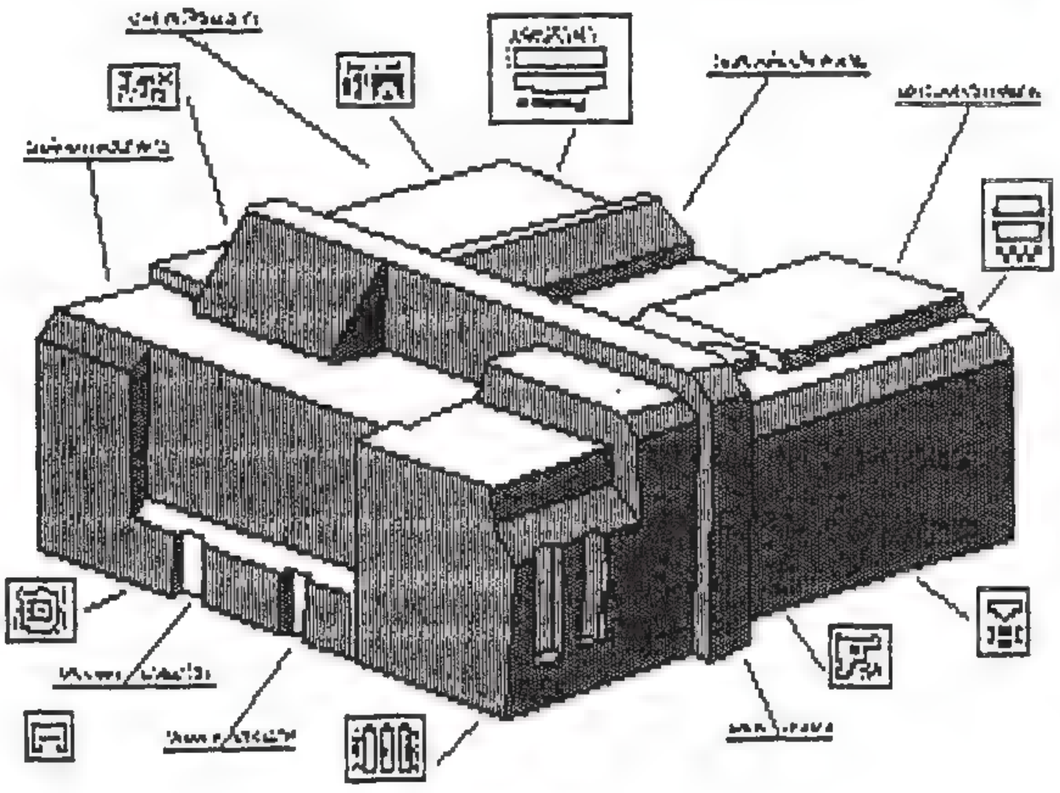
HUDSON BLOCK

RESTRICTED ACCESS
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL
ONLY! SEE FILE P459A



FOR INTERNAL SCHEMATIC SEE FILE S33321CV

--A 3-D SCHEMATIC OF HUDSON BLOCK-- THE WHOLE THINGS A FALSE FRONT!



THE INSIDE HAS BEEN GUTTED AND COMPLETELY REBUILT... WITH IT'S OWN TUNNEL NETWORK TO POINTS ALL OVER THE CITY. INCREDIBLE!

OROKU SAKI MUST BE THERE.

WE'LL NEED A DIVERSION TO PULL FOOT TROOPS AWAY FROM THE MAIN COMPLEX... TIMED AND PRESET INFILTRATION ALARMS AT VARIOUS OUTPOSTS AROUND THE CITY SHOULD DO IT.

NOW... WE NEED AWAY IN... A QUIET SPOT, FAR FROM INTERNAL TRAFFIC PATTERNS.

...SHOULD HAVE PLENTY OF COVER, AND EASY ACCESS FROM THE CITY'S DRAINAGE SYSTEMS.

WAIT A MINUTE-- HERE!

WE'LL ATTACK...

--HERE!

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO, ZOG... AND DO IT QUIETLY!

YES SIR... CAREFUL... HEKH, HEKH.

ZZZZZZ

THAT CREATURE IS COMPLETELY INSANE, AND SHOULD NOT BE ALIVE! IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE HE SURVIVED, GONE UNSEEN ALL THIS TIME...

...OUR AIR ALONE EATS AT HIS BRAIN LIKE A CANCER-- HE'S A WALKING TIME BOMB!

11

UNITED SAVINGS BANK

I KNOW... I CAN BARELY CONTROL HIM MYSELF, BUT WE'VE STRUCK SOME MEMORY CHORD IN WHATS LEFT OF HIS BRAIN-- HE THINKS WE'RE ON HIS SIDE, ALIENS, PART OF THE SCOUTING PARTY FOR A TRICERATON INVASION.

ALL THIS TIME HE'S WAITED... SINCE...

YEAH... SINCE THEN.

ZZZZZZ

CAREFUL... HEKH, HEKH, YESSSS!

THIS IS SUICIDE...

12

WHAT WAS THAT?

NOTHING.

THE LAST OF THE DIVERSION ALARMS SHOULD HAVE GONE OFF BY NOW. HOPEFULLY, MOST OF THE MAIN FOOT GUARD HAS LEFT THE COMPLEX; IF NOT...

LOOKS LIKE HE'S ALMOST THROUGH.

COMMANDER ZORAPH... WHEEZE... ZOG REQUIRES ASSISTANCE

YOU GOT IT.

FINISH KKAGGHH... THE CUT.

HEKH, HEKH.

REMEMBER... QUIETLY.

CAREFULL... HEKH, HEKH... ZOG KNOW QUIET.

VVRRRGGHHNN... WHHEEZE... ZOG... KNOWS...

EERRRAHHHH... QUIET.

SSSCRRAAREETTTT

GOOD JOB, SOLDIER, THE HIGH COMMAND SHALL HEAR OF YOUR EFFORTS.

THANK YOU, SIR... HEKH, HEKH...

ON TARGET, GUYS... WE GOT THE VAULT-- UNOPENED!

PERFECT! THE SCHEMATIC WAS CORRECT.

GOOD ZOG... YESSS... THE FLEET WILL HEAR OF ZOG... HEKH, HEKH, HEH.

WE'VE BEEN LUCKY SO FAR... UNDETECTED, THIS CUT SHOULD LEAD TO A STORAGE AREA.. KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED.

CAREFUL... ZOG... HEH... ALMOST THROUGH... KKKAAOGH.

COMMANDER... WHEEZE... ZOG HAS FINISHED.

GOOD JOB! NOW HELP ME-- QUIETLY.

ZOG KNOWS QUIET... HEKH, HEKH.

PRREETTT

TWO AND O, DON!

HEY--WE GOT MOVEMENT OVER HERE!

16.

VOICES...

FOOT-- GUARDS AND WORKERS!

FAN OUT... ON MY SIGNAL--SWIFT AND SILENT!

ZOG-- NO!!

LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC!!

17

CRUMPP

WACKK

BBASHH

ZZZZ

SO MUCH FOR SILENT--! QUICKLY NOW--THIS WAY!

THIS SHOULD LEAD TO A MAIN ACCESS CORRIDOR... WE CAN GET TO ANY POINT IN THE STRUCTURE FROM HERE. WATCH FOR GUARDS!

HEKH, HEKH, HEKH...

18.

--MISTAKE!!!

DON'T LET ANY GET AWAY!

COVER THE EXITS!

19.

20.

WWHHSSSS

WWHHSSSS

THUK

TANG

SSNAKK

21.

TING

THWAP

THUD

NO ONE LEAVES!

CHNK

22

SCHLPPTINK

SHINK

WWHHRRRRSSSS

SHEKH

23

DIE, DIE!! ALL IN THIS EVIL PLACE MUST DIE--!

ALL WHO OPPOSE THE... KIRAGSH... REPUBLIC -- MUST DIE!

ZACKKK

...WATCH IT!

ZRACK

CHUCKK

THUCKK

ERRRR... CAREFUL, ZOG...

...HEKH, HEKH...

WHEEZEE... HEKH, HEKH... ZOG RULES--!

...RIGHT...

MY MISTAKE-- WE SHOULD HAVE EXITED AN EASTERN DOOR. THIS WAY...

...THROUGH HERE-- WHOA!

WHHSSss

GUARD!

ANOTHER!

25

HAII!

THIS IS JUST A LOADING DOCK. THAT TUNNEL SHOULD LEAD US TO A MAIN OPERATIONS AREA.

CHOKK

LET'S GO, ZOG... WE'RE HITCHING A RIDE.

...ARMORED SUPPORT... HEKH, HEKH! NOW WE'VE GOT 'EM... TOTAL DESTRUCTION... COUGH...

HEKH... GOOD... KKAGUGHHK...

"INTO THE VALLEY OF DEATH, RODE THE SIX HUNDRED"... LET'S ROLL!

NO SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS--NOTHING! THEY MUST NOT EXPECT ANYONE TO GET IN THIS DEEP.

WE'VE BEEN LUCKY SO FAR, WE STILL HOLD THE HIGH CARDS...

UH, OH-- BLACK OUT--!!

DAMNIT-- THEY'RE ON TO US!

EEURRRNNTT EEURRRNNTT EEURRRNNTT

LOOKS LIKE THE TUNNEL OPENS UP AHEAD--!

"INTO THE VALLEY OF DEATH"...

EEURRRNNTT
EEURRRNNTT
EEURRRNNTT
EEURRRNNTT
EEURRRNNTT
EEURRRNNTT
GET READY--
--THIS'LL BE A ROUGH LANDING!
28

SSSHHRRAACKKKK
BBRRRTTT
BBRRTTT
29
30

WATCH YOUR FLANKS-- THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!

ZZZZZZ

BUGS, BUGS... AARRGGHACKK... TOO MANY...KKÄGHH... CAN'T GET PINNED DOWN!

BRRRRTT

SPAKK

THUNK

THEPP ZZZZZZZZ

ZAORK

DON'T STOP MOVING-- ADVANCE! THEY'RE QUICK... KKAUGHHOCKK... BREAK'EM UP!

TAKE NO PRISONERS!!

ZARK

LONG...

ZEARK

...LIVE...

ZOOK

...THE...

...REPUBLIC-!!

BRRRTTT

GGRAHHHH!

GUGHKK...BUGS... KILL, BUGS...!

CHWAP

CHUDD

BROOK

TOTAL...HEKH... DESTRUCTION... HEKH, HEKH... FOLLOW ME, GRUNG-

FOLLOW ME TO VICTORY... KKAUGH KKFFOKKK... WHHEEZEEE...

SKAKKK

33.

...ONWARD...

UGKH... ZOG KNOWS... KAUGHK, KRSERGHH, SPHRRRER

...ZOG... KNOWS... WHEEZE...

SSKHAKK

CHOCKK

EEIPEP

... LONG ... LIVE ... THE ... ZORUSHC ...

35.

KA-CHUDDD

BLOOD... EVERYWHERE--! ZOG'S BEEN HIT... BADLY...

OH, NOOO... ZOG...

POOR CREATURE...

HE'S FINISHED.

LEO... CHOKE... LOOK--!

30.

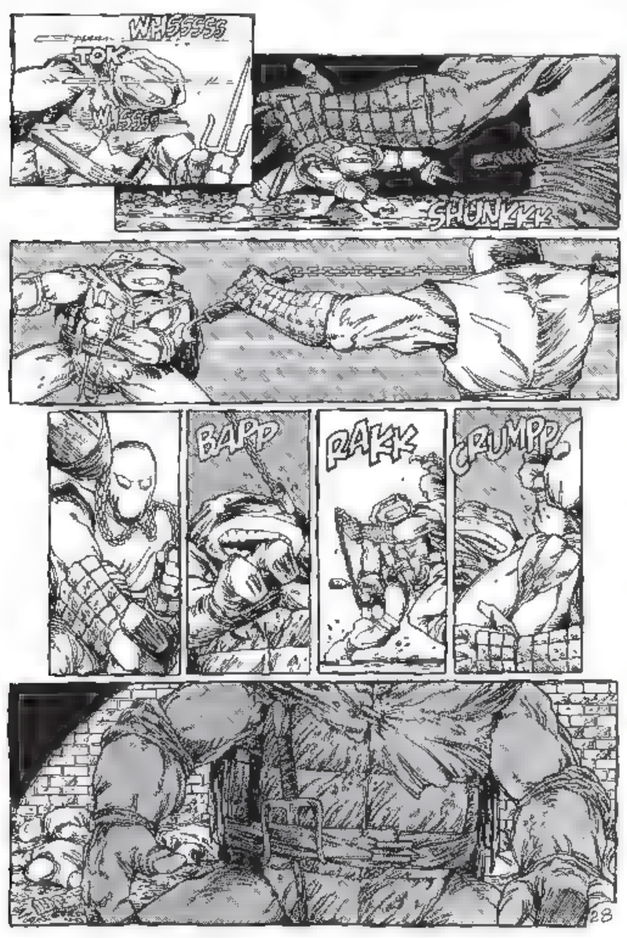
ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

One of the cool design change-ups that we made for this series was the switch from doing a right-hand starting splash or intro page for each issue. Instead, the first page or pages would be a two-page spread, and the full headshot of the Triceraton that Pete did to kick off issue #20 was brilliant.

I think it's interesting that when you look at issues #19 and #20 like this, in a collection where you can flip back and forth, you can easily see the choices I made to tell the story the way I thought it should be done and paced, as compared with how Pete made the decisions he did for how he thought the second issue should be done and paced. Each is very effective and works wonderfully.

I think if we switched issues it really wouldn't have made either issue any more enjoyable, or less so—the story is the same. But what is cool is that when you get to issue #21, where we shared the layout chores, it is pretty seamless for the most part. I mean, you can read the fight layouts with all the little panels and transitions I used, as seen in #19, and you can see the splash page with floating panels style Pete used in #20 spread throughout and not feel the slightest disconnect.



Story-wise, I thought #20 was a real barn-burner—from the opening spread with the Triceraton, to the closing spread with the three mutant Shredders, it was non-stop. With the first issue getting them to NY, and the setup for the mission sorted there, this issue was focused on getting them inside the Shredder's HQ/Lair/Lab and that was it. I think that helped raise the action bar—the mission was focused—not a lot of backstory and figuring stuff out. They were there to find the Shredder and kill him again, or die trying.

The Golem-style feel to the Triceratons here was incredibly fun and inspiring—and emotional. I liked the connection he and Raph had, and I liked that Zog, in his own twisted mind's eye, was finishing a fight that would bring him the final glory and have him properly represent his race. Right down to his last actions and dying breath, he would go the way any true gladiator would want to go—all guns blazing.

I think the idea that there would be these massive bunker-like places in NYC hiding in plain sight—much like what we had done with the TCRI aliens in books #4 to #7—has more to do with the brewery scene in the *Untouchables* than the Baxter building in the *Fantastic Four*. But both make for some cool storytelling options in any comic book. A whole lot of fun!

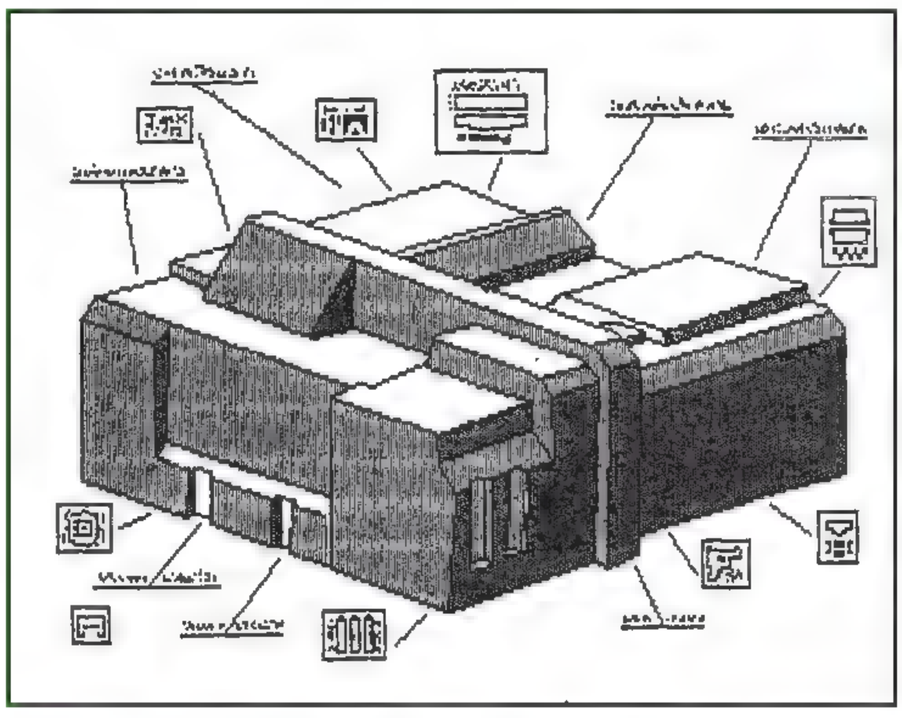
Eric Talbot's inks and tones in this issue over Jim Lawson's pencils work great! I always thought their styles had a nice blend—almost stronger together than they were apart. But only almost! Together it really worked for the issue.

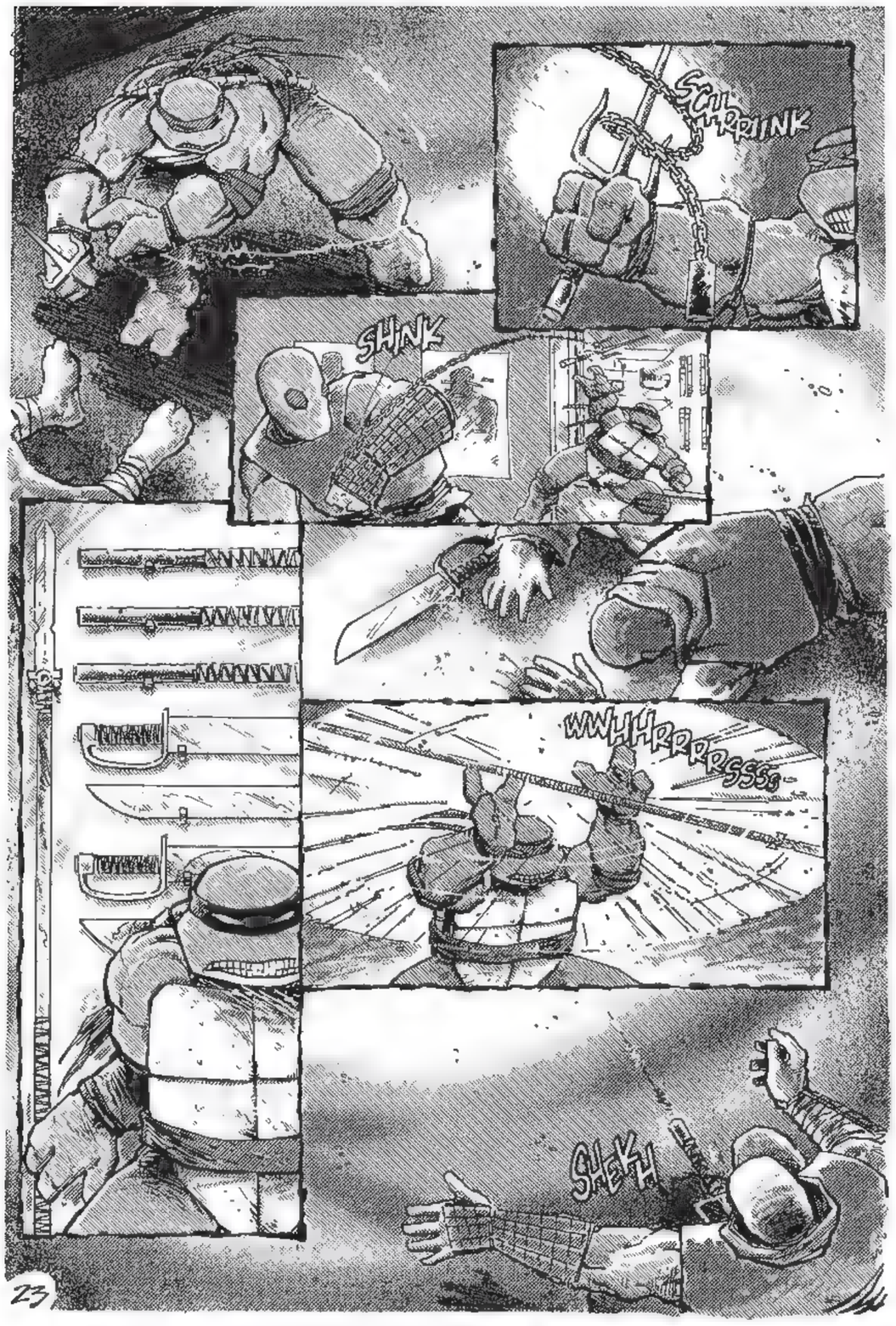
I also liked that Pete found another chance to show off his advanced computer graphic skills, by adding the schematic to the Bank Building/Lab/Lair! Very cool and ahead of its time.

ANNOTATIONS

PETER LAIRD

This issue represents one of the relatively rare times I laid out an issue of *TMNT* that both Kevin and I worked on. Well… I laid out *most* of this issue, as I will explain later. And the layouts I created, from which Jim Lawson penciled the pages, are not my typical traditional comic book layouts. For some reason, I got a little experimental and put in some crazy overlapping panels. I think for the most part it worked pretty well.





Ideas for 3-issue · return and end of the Shredder

① Raphael returns to NYC to settle things once and for all with the Shredder · teams up with mutated Tricaraton · other three turtles show up at end of book 1

② Turtles and Tricaraton mount big battle against foot stronghold/ Shredder's headquarters.* (end book 2 with unmasking of Shredder/worm?)

idea: if we use the Shredder-as-mutated-tapeworm concept, perhaps there can be other unsuccessful worm mutations (really gross and deformed) that battle the turtles in the 3rd book

* how about it being in a large private hospital? Unnoticed, it could operate as a headquarters unmolested.

③ While the turtles battle the false Shredders, Casey and Splinter arrive. Shredder*, fights Casey · takes him out. Then there is a battle to the death between Splinter and the Shredder no holds barred fight · lots of blood · Splinter uses teeth, claws to fight Shredder

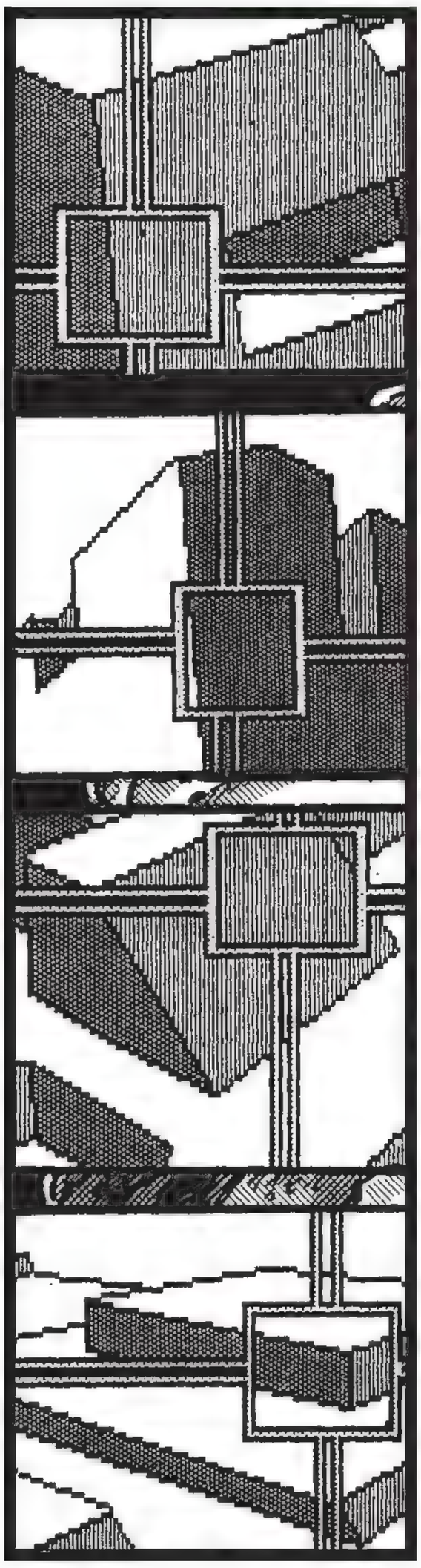
* and wearing nasty and distorted versions of the shredder's armor

ANNOTATIONS

Pages 1–2: We kicked off this issue with another two-page spread, and I love the way Eric inked Jim's pencils here—just beautiful.

Page 5: I think this may be my favorite page as far as the layouts go. I like the way the top panel actually extends out to the edges of the whole page, and that you get the view of what's happening under the water as well— the alligator, what looks like a coelacanth, and a human skeleton, among other debris.

Page 6: This page takes a similar approach to page 5's layout, with multiple small panels overlaid on a background which is actually one panel.



Pages 8–10: It's funny to look at the computer graphics I used on these pages and think that they were close to "state of the art" for home computers at the time. I believe I did them with my old Atari ST computer. Crude by today's standards, but I think it worked.

Page 15: I really like the inking here as Zog blasts away at the wall—cool lighting. Jim and Eric made a great team on this issue.

I should also mention that I think Steve Lavigne did some of his best lettering on this issue—especially the irregular lettering in the word balloons of the crazed Zog.

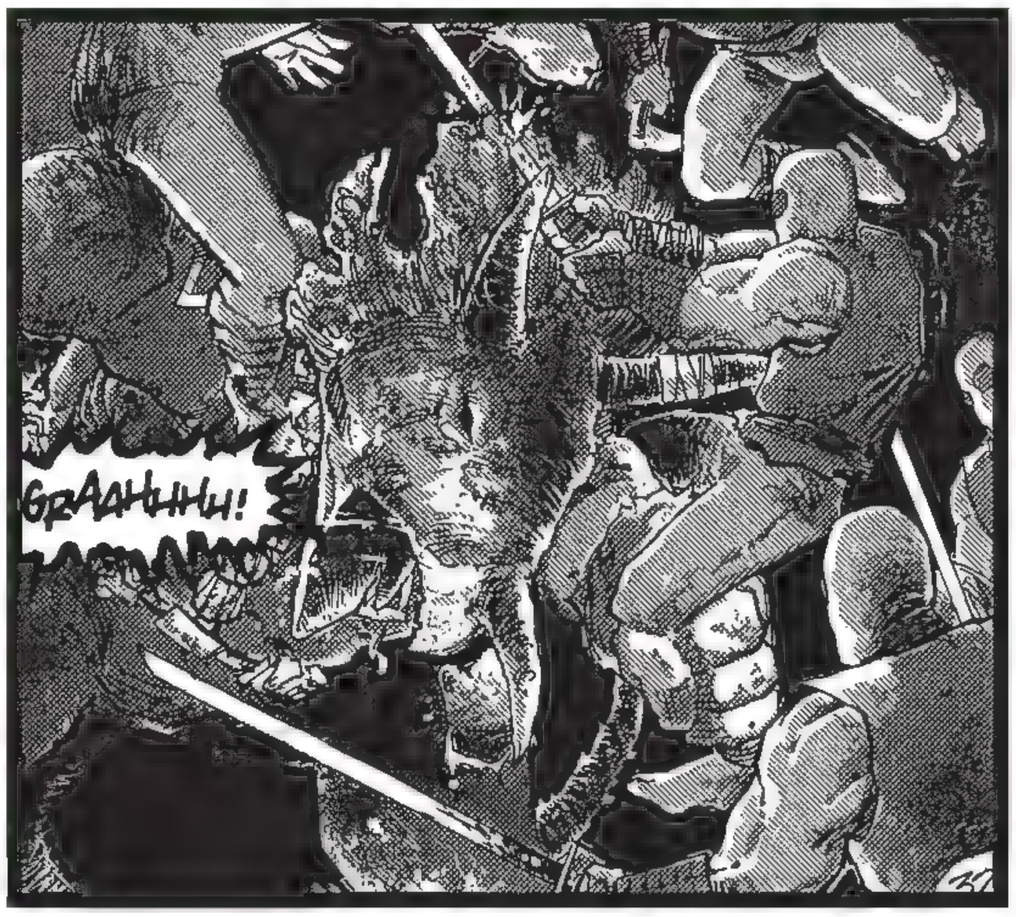
Page 16: Whenever I look at this page, I think of the inking mistake that was made and not fully corrected. Can you see it?

Look closely at the second Turtle coming through the hole in the wall that Zog has just cut with his blaster. Follow the line of the edge of that hole—see how it passes right through the fingers of the Turtle's right hand and left arm? I seem to recall that someone was supposed to touch this up with White Out, but it never happened.

Page 19–24: This is a brutal sequence, as the Turtles realize they've messed up in their plan, and stumbled into a dojo full of Foot soldiers training… and then realize they have to kill them all or they'll spread the alarm and alert the Shredder.

I love the detail in the final panel on page 24 of Zog scarfing down a dead rat snack, one of several he kept tucked into his belt.

Pages 25–30: At this point in time, I can't recall which of these pages were laid out by Kevin. As I remember it, I think it was either after I'd finished my layouts or possibly when the pages had been penciled from them, we were looking the book over and Kevin felt that a couple of extra pages were needed for the pacing of this scene where the Turtles and Zog commandeer a Foot transport hauler (another totally cool Jim Lawson-designed vehicle) and use it to further advance their invasion of the Foot headquarters. An incursion that had started as a stealthy infiltration, but partly (or mostly) because of Zog's noisy approach to things, had turned into a brute-force invasion.



Page 32: Zog seems unstoppable, but he's taking some serious damage here. His blaster runs out of juice, so he reverts to his very effective built-in weapons—his horns and great strength. I love the action scene Jim drew at the bottom of the page, as Zog takes on a group of Foot soldiers.

Pages 33–35: Zog is clearly starting to slow down here, as all of his wounds begin to take their toll. Would he have been able to defend himself against what lay in wait for him had he been undamaged? Hard to say.

Pages 37–38: Now we get our first clear view of what finally killed Zog… and it's pretty weird! I can't remember which of us designed these three Shredder-esque monsters, but I think they were pretty cool designs (and even eventually made it into an episode of the 4Kids *TMNT* TV series adapting this issue).

EASTMAN AND LAIRD'S

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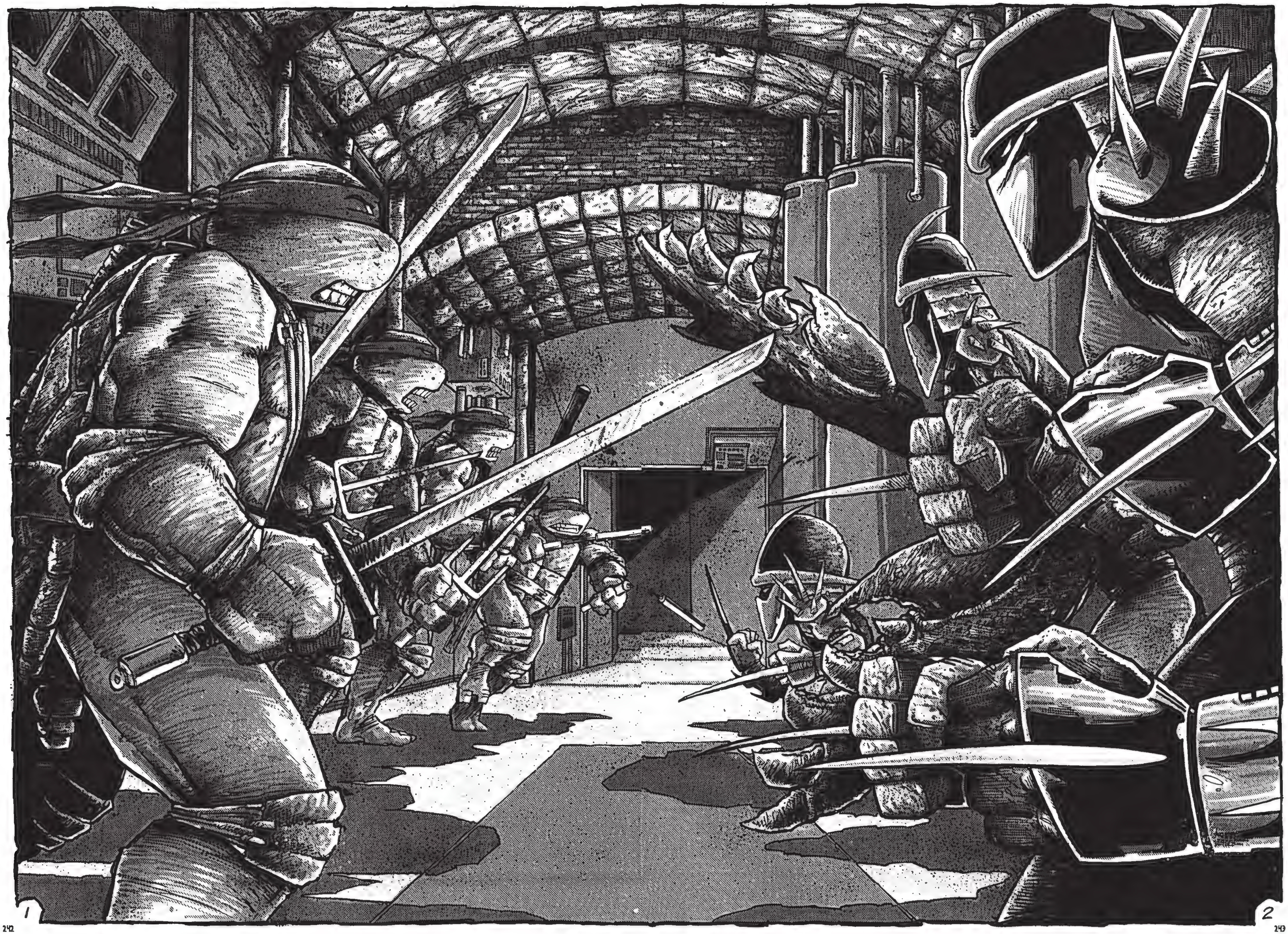
RETURN TO NEW YORK

BOOK THREE

#21


1
2

SKAKK

CHANNGG

SHUCKK

RIPP

3

WHSSSSSS

CHANG

GRAGGH!

THOK

WORMS--?!!

WHAT THE HELL ARE THESE THINGS?!

THUKK

CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE MORE TIME HERE-- HE COULD GET AWAY!

THEY CAN HANDLE THIS--

RAPH--?!

GHUAK

RAPHAEL, NO--!!

WHUDD

CRUMP

KYANGG

DAMN YOU RAPHAEL!

--SAKI IS MINE!

4

WHISSS

ROAR

...MINE...

...MUST...

SKAKKK

WE...

...STAY TOGETHER!

WWHUDD

KA-CKUNGG

IT WAS HOW WE WERE TAUGHT...

5

...MINE...

THUKK!

KRAKK

SKUKK

ARRR!-- ENOUGH!

...WATCH YOUR BROTHER'S BACK!

WWHHTTT

WWAPP

...MINE...

KKLUDD

UURKKK

WWHOKK

UHHRR...

THESE THINGS-- CREATURES-- THINK!

...LURING US...

THEY KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY'RE DOING...

...TO THEIR HOME TURF!

8

WHSSS

...SO...

WHSSSS

...CLOSE...

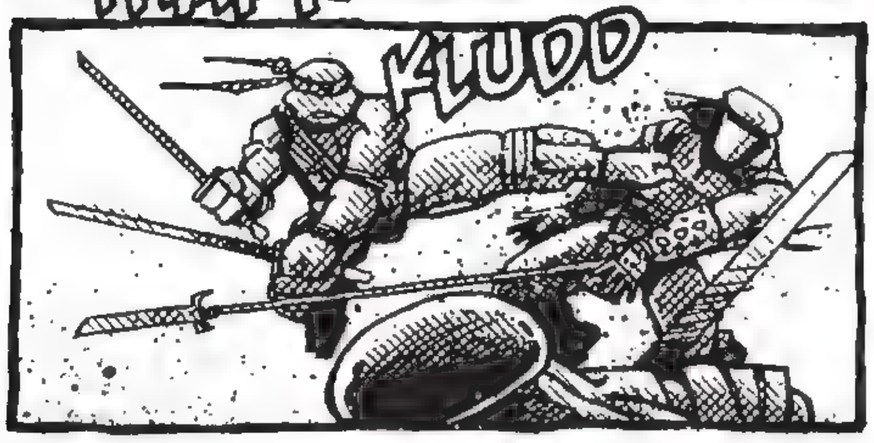
EEURRHHGGG!!

KLAKK

CHOKK

THUDD

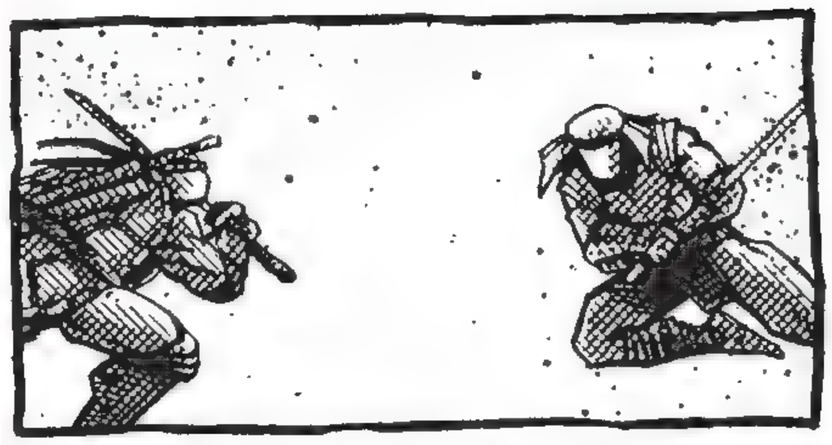
THAKK


KLUDD

CHUDD

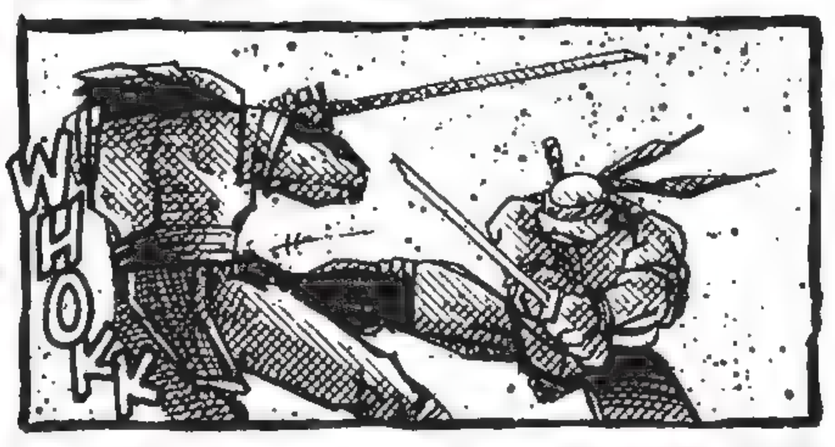
HSSSS

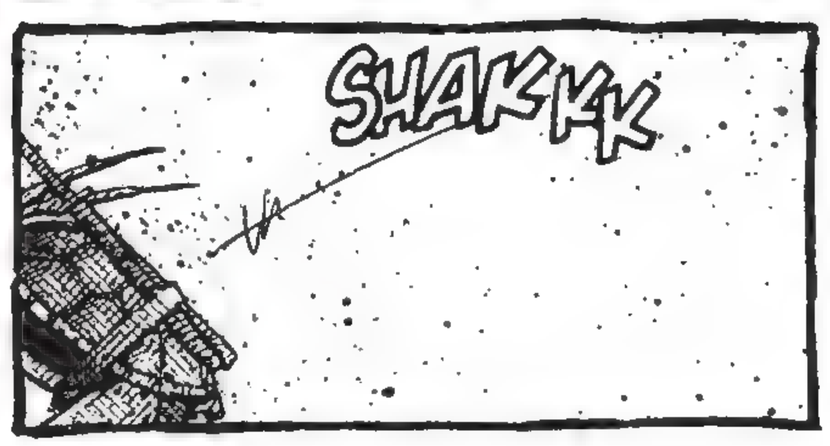
WHUKK
SHCK



CHANGG

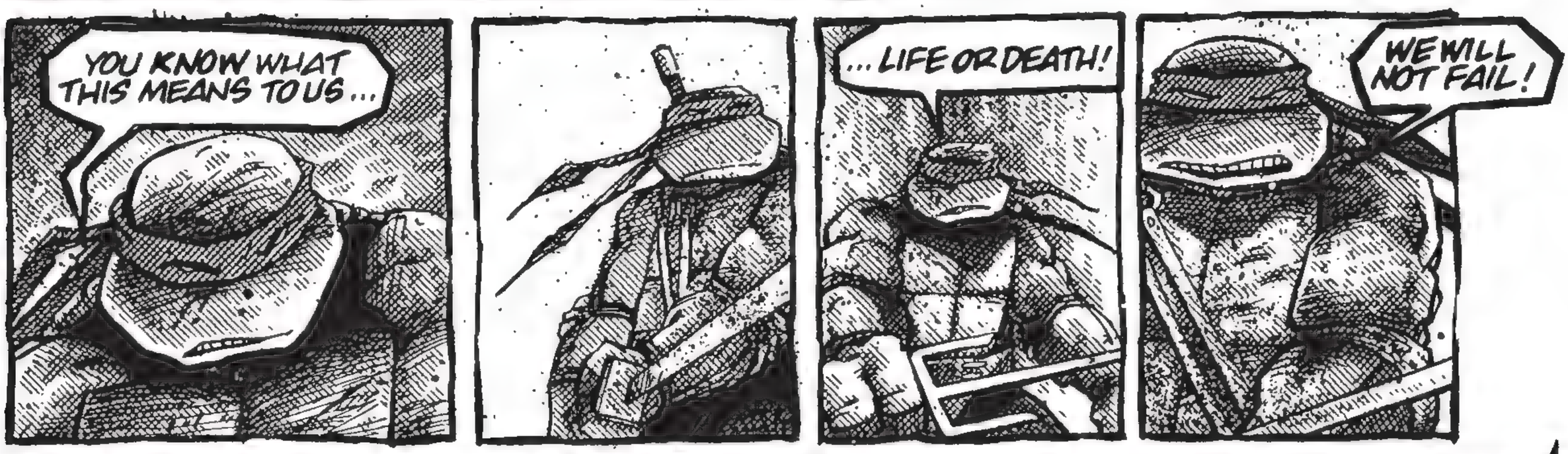
KKRANNG


WHOKK

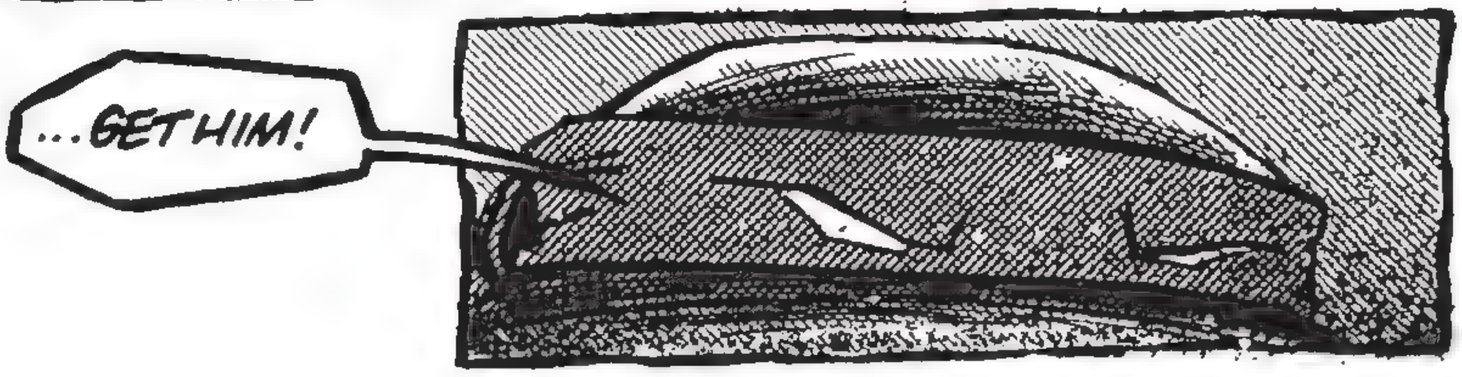

SHAKKKK

YOU... ARE A FOOL!!

I KNOW...
... ALMOST A DEAD ONE.
CAN'T HELP IT... DON'T THINK... HAVE NO CONTROL. SPLINTER ALWAYS SAID SO...


YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS TO US...
... LIFE OR DEATH!
WE WILL NOT FAIL!

YOU, BROTHER-- YOU MUST NOT FAIL!
I'LL FIND DON AND MIKE... AND TOGETHER WE'LL COME TO YOU...


...GET HIM!

THACKK

WWHOKK

UHHW...

DAV--!

SPAK

SPUK

NO-- FOOT!

BRRTTT

BRRTTT

12

COME HERE, YOU LITTLE...

...PUKE!

THAT'S IT!

BRTTT

BRTTT

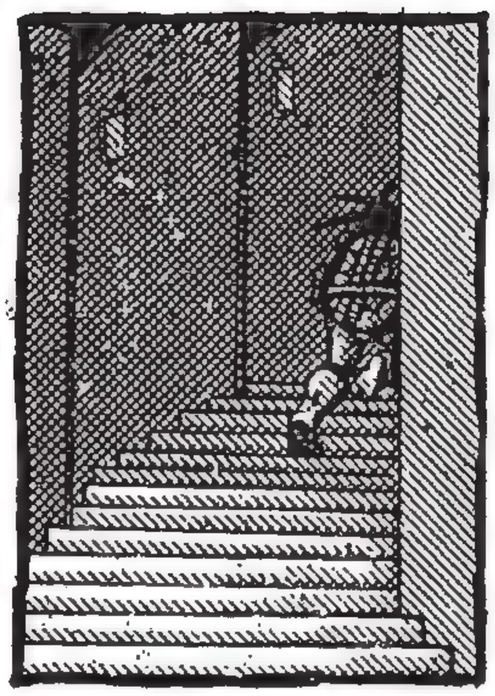
ONCE MORE— COME ON!

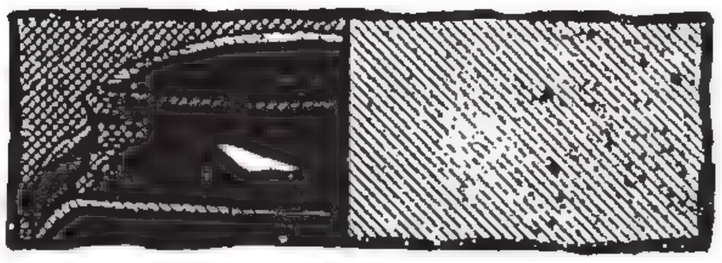
THUKK

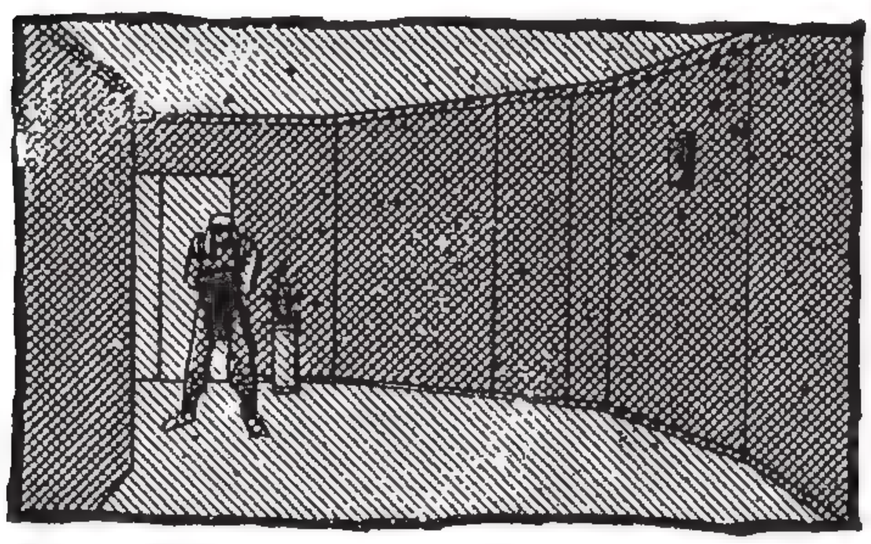
BRTTT

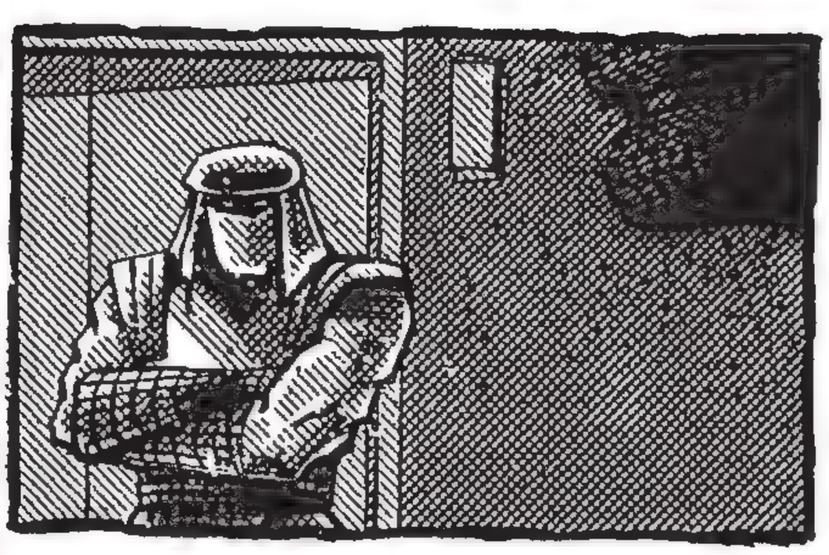
KKUDD

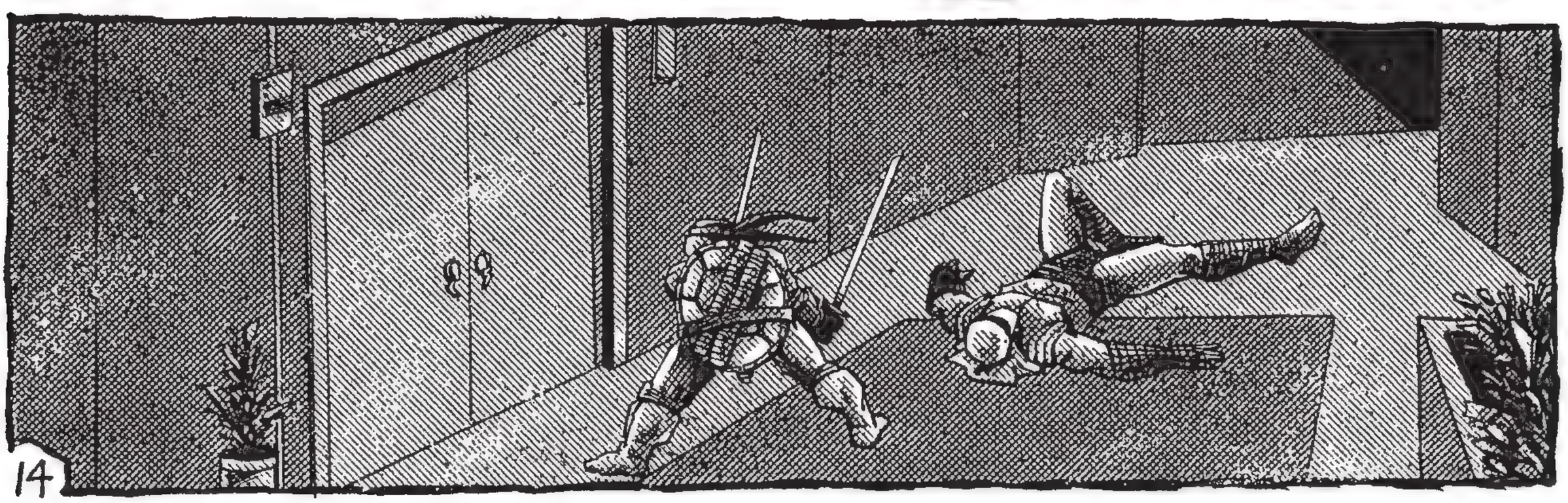
13 FFZZZZZKACCKKKKTTT











SPAKK SPAKK THAKK

WE'RE PINNED DOWN--WHERE THE HELL ARE RAPH AND LEO--?!!

DON'T KNOW, BUT WE GOTTA HOLD OUT-- DO WHAT WE CAN FOR NOW!

MAKE EACH ONE COUNT--!

SKUKK

BBRRTT

BBRRTTTT

MIKE AND DON-- TRAPPED!

TOO MANY... TOO MUCH OPEN AREA TO GET THEM ALL...

OROKU SAKI--

--FACE ME!

GLADLY...

...LEONARDO.

I'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME.

TOO LONG.

THREE YEARS AGO I SAW YOU DIE -- WHY DO YOU HAUNT US?!

IS THAT IMPORTANT?

YES... TO YOU, I SUPPOSE IT IS.

LONG AGO, ON A ROOFTOP, YOU SAW OROKO SAKI DESTROYED -- TORN TO PIECES BY HIS OWN DEVICE!

YOU SAW ME DIE!

BUT THEY FOUND ME... MY PEOPLE FOUND ME... MY PIECES...

17

THE FOOT CLAN IS VERY RESOURCEFUL... AND HAS KNOWLEDGE OF A GREAT MANY SKILLS.

SOME FROM THE TIME OF LEGENDS AND MYTH... SOME FROM THE TIME OF LOGIC AND SCIENCE.

TOGETHER... ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.

IMAGINE A CREATURE OF OUR EARTH-- A WORM. SMALL, BLIND, USELESS... BUT, IT EATS.

AND FROM WHAT IT EATS, IT LEARNS, AND ADAPTS ITS OWN CELLS STRUCTURES. OTHERS EAT FROM THE SAME DISH, AND JOIN TOGETHER, TAKING ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FORM.

THIS COLONY BECOMES A DIFFERENT BEING!

THREE EARLY EXPERIMENTS YOU MET ON YOUR WAY HERE... THE FOURTH TIME THEY FED ON ME.

THEY ATE, AND BEGAN TO THINK AND ACT AS ONE... FORM ONE STRUCTURE... ONE BEING.

I STOOD... GROTESQUE... ALIVE!!

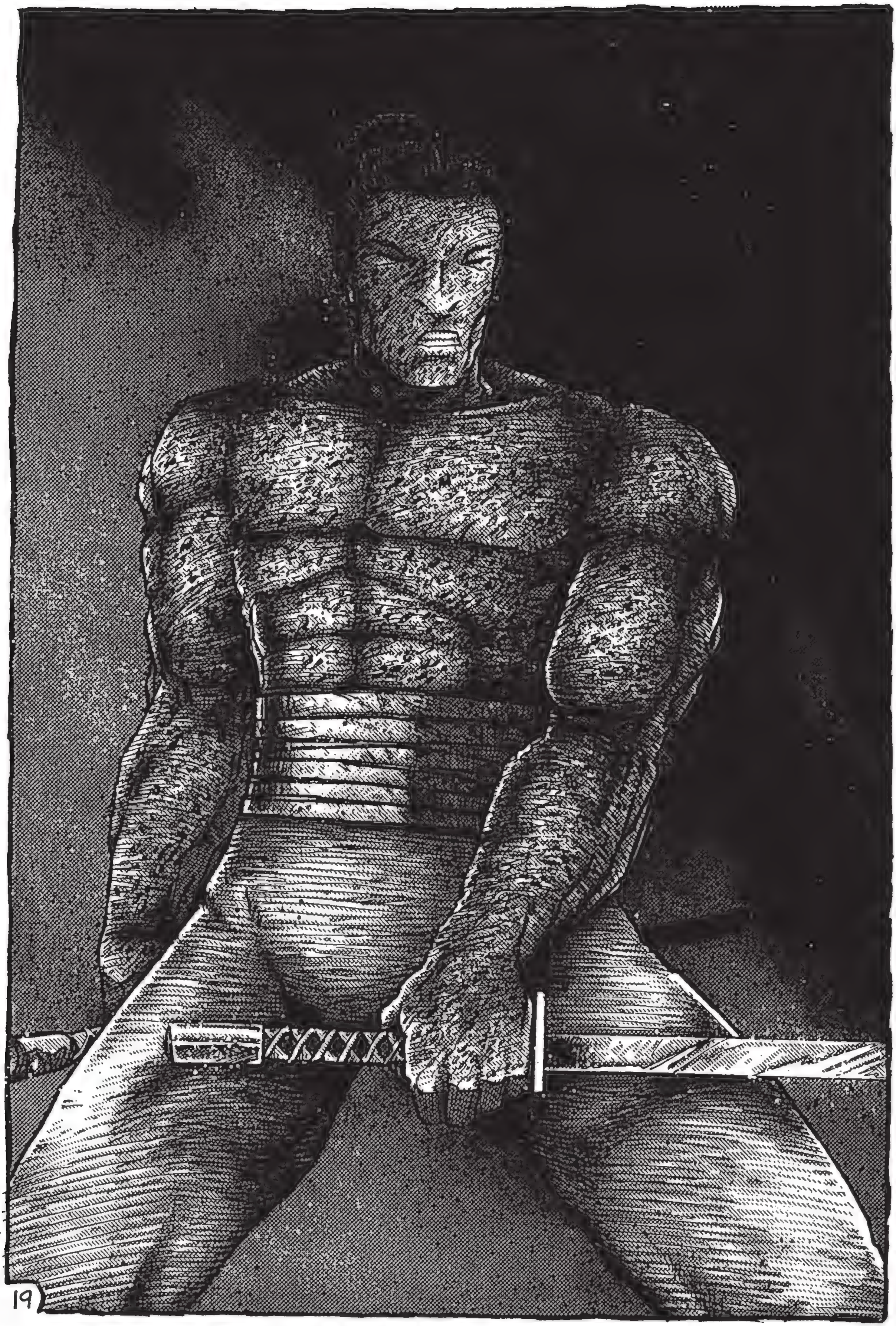
MY LUST FOR VENGEANCE, MY HATRED FOR YOU-- STRONGER THAN BEFORE!!

LONG I'VE WAITED...

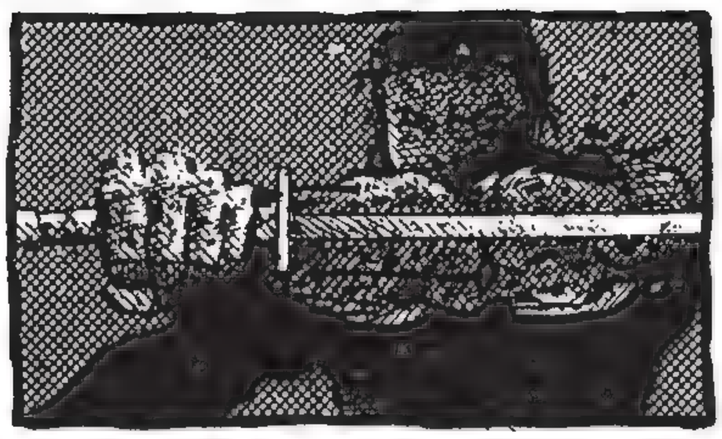
...BUT NOW...

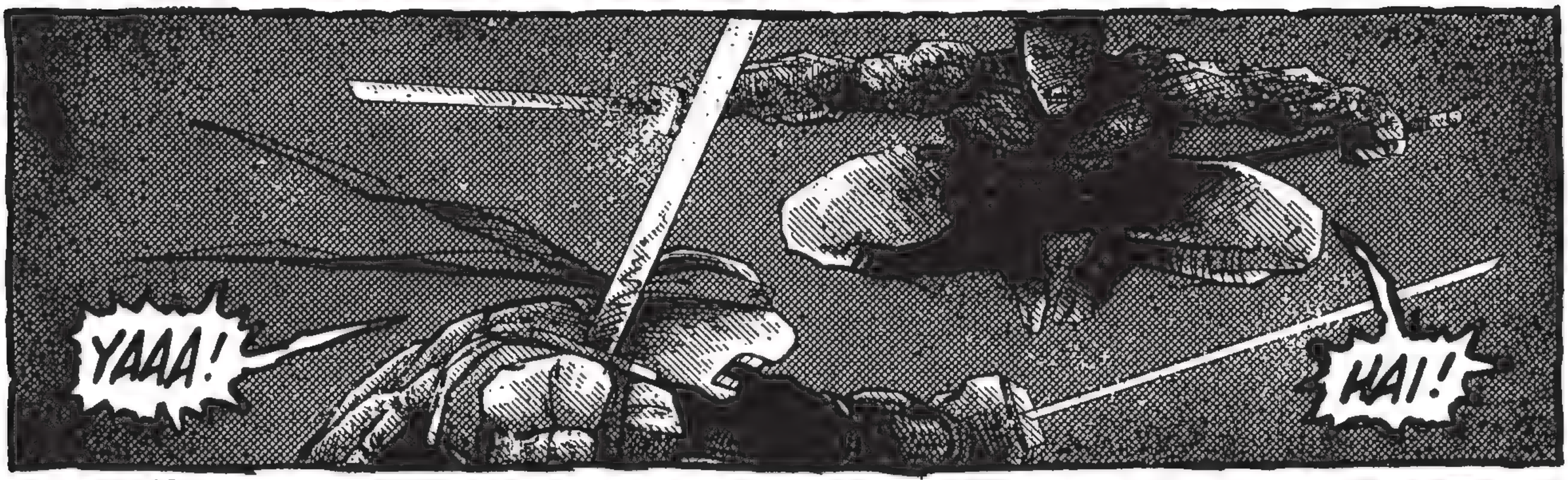
KLANGG

...THE WAITING IS OVER.

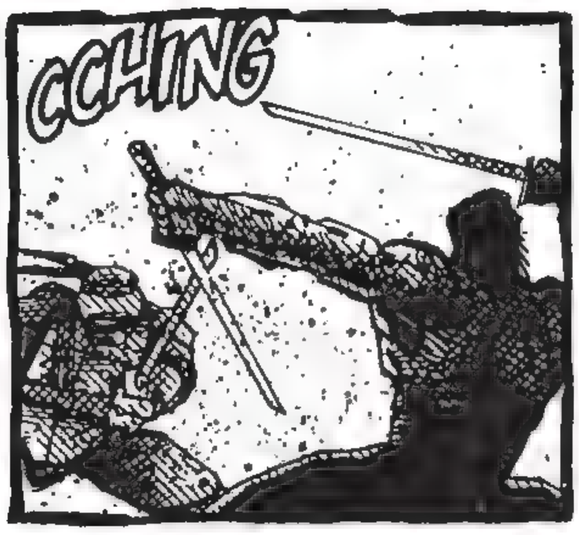

19

SPACK
CKAKK
SPAK
LAST ONE, DON--!
MAKE IT COUNT.
BBRTTT
BBRTTT
LOOK--!!
RRRRRRNNNNNGGGG
SPAK
SPAK
WHOOP
SPAKK
BBRTTT



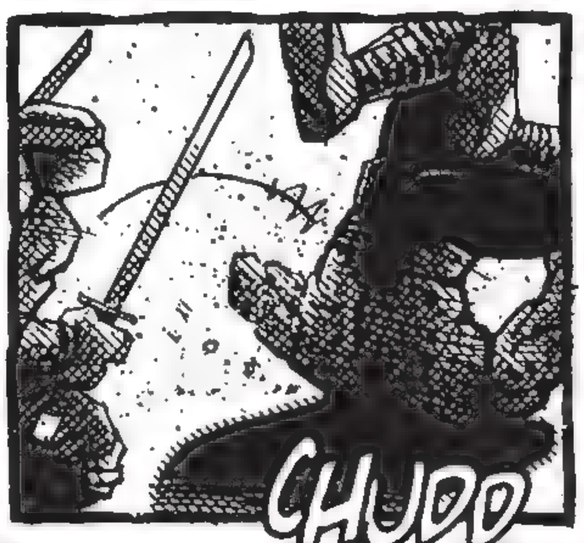

YAAA!
HAI!

KKANG

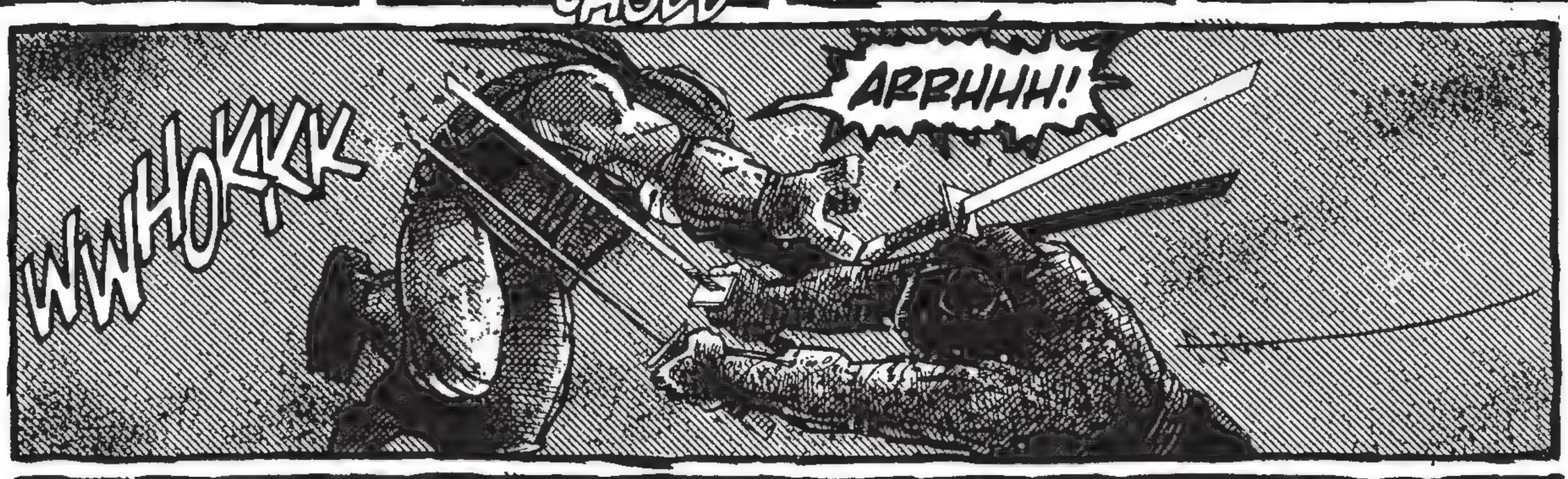

CCHING

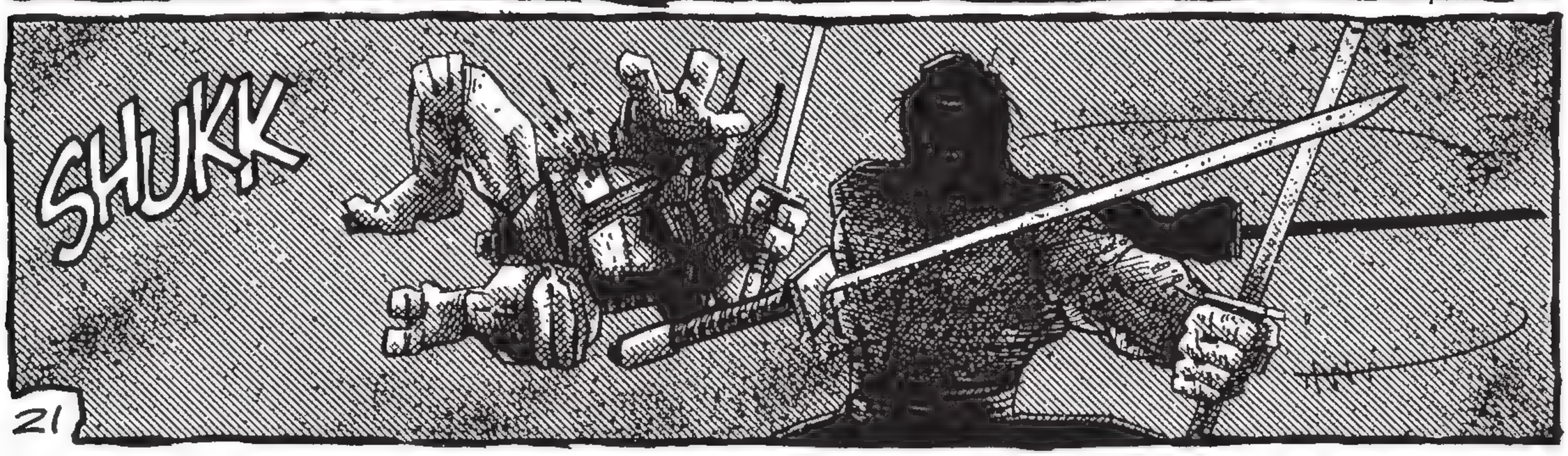
THUCKK

FUMP


CHUDD

GAHH!


WWHOKKK
ARRHHH!


SHUKK

21

ERRRR...

WHUMPP

HAH!

I CANNOT DIE!

YES-- YOU CAN...

...AND YOU WILL!

KACHANGG

HYAAAH!

KKRINGG

WHOKKK

KA-CKANGKK

CHFKK

WHSSSSS

SHUCKKK

SSPAKK

WHUKK

THKKK

KKLUDD

CCLANGG

WAKKK

CHUDD

KKLANG

CCRUMP

KKRAAASSSSSHHH

24

WAPP

FUMP

SKKREEEEE

CCHUDD

FKRASSHHH

BRRTTT

WHP WHP WHP WHP THOKK

TIME TO EVEN THE ODDS A LITTLE...

RAPH--WHERE'S LEO?!!

BUSY--

--AND WE'LL FIND HIM IN HALF A SECOND...

FIRST WE SLOW THESE BUMS DOWN A BIT!

WATCH--!

BBRRTTT

SPAK

FUPP

SPAK

KACHOOMM

FUMP

SSSSHOOMMMM

KA POOMM

FFOARRRRR

WWHOKK

HYAAAH!

SSHNNKK

27

HUT!

HAI!

EEEYAUH!

KKLANG

HYAAAH!

CHING

KKLACKK

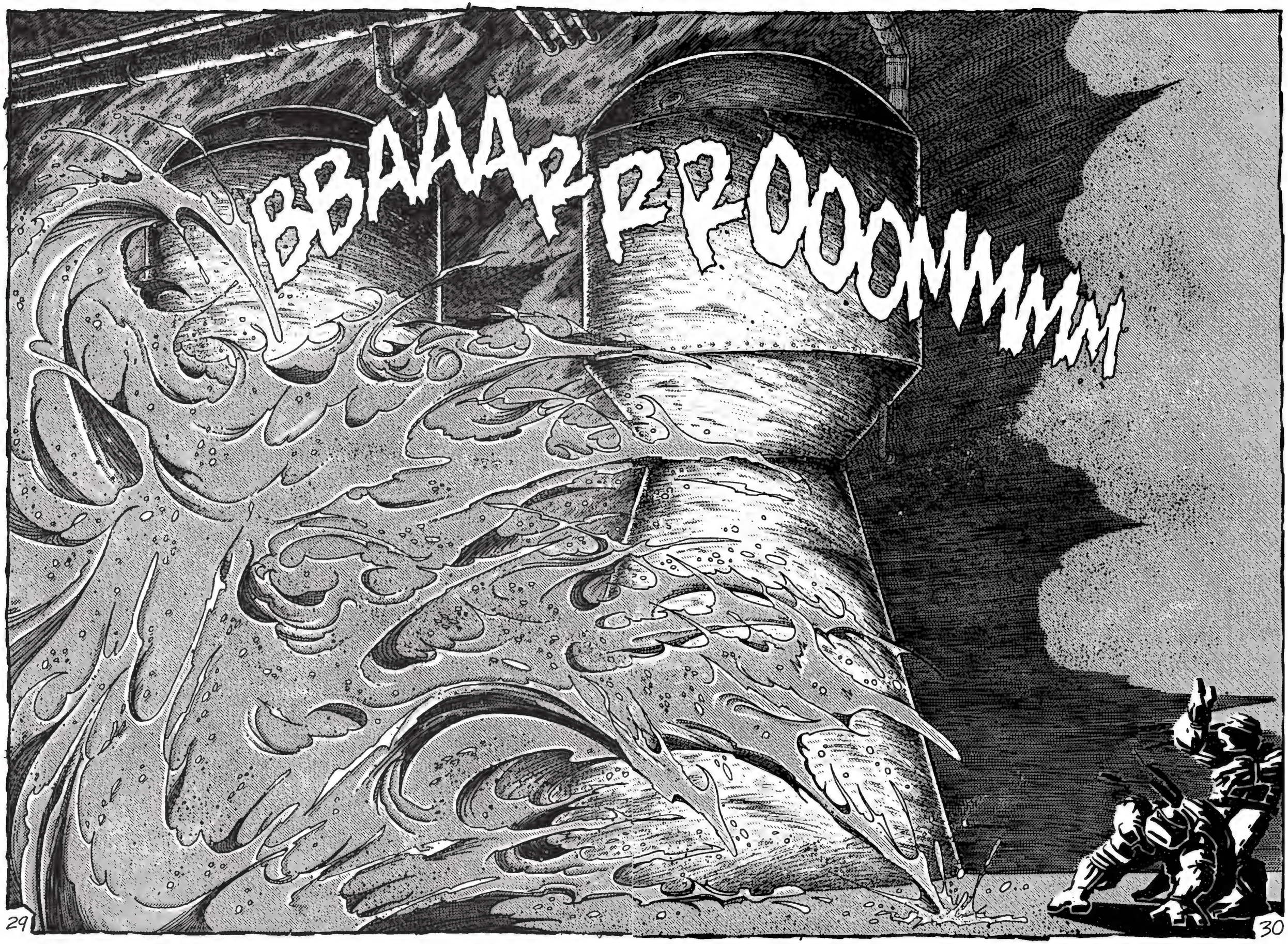
CRUMP

UNNGLILINN...

TIME

TO

DIE!


BBAAARRROOOMMMM
29
30

BBBAAARRROOMMMMM
CRUMMMBLEEE
SSKKKREEEEERRACKKKKM
CCRAKKKK
RROOMMMMMM
CHAAKKK
RREEEETTTT
RRAKKK
KA-BASHHHRRROOMMMBLEEEEE
31
32

PRRROAR RRRRSSSS

BACK-- BACK--!

PRUMBLEERREET

THAT SHOULD HOLD'EM FOR A WHILE-- LETS FIND LEO BEFORE MORE OF THEM FIND US!

THIS WAY--!

THE PLACE IS BREAKING UP!

BAROOMMM

SKRREETTTT

TOO LATE--

HAI--!

WHHOKK

TTHAKK

FORGET IT, WE'VE GOT TO FIND LEO--!

DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT--!

I THINK... THIS WAY...

OH MY GOD...

PRRRUMMBLEERREETTT

33

KABOOM

RRRROAARRR

RRRRHHAAAAA

FAA SSCHOOMMMMM

CQUMP

WWUUPP

THUD

WOK

SPAKK

CHAKK

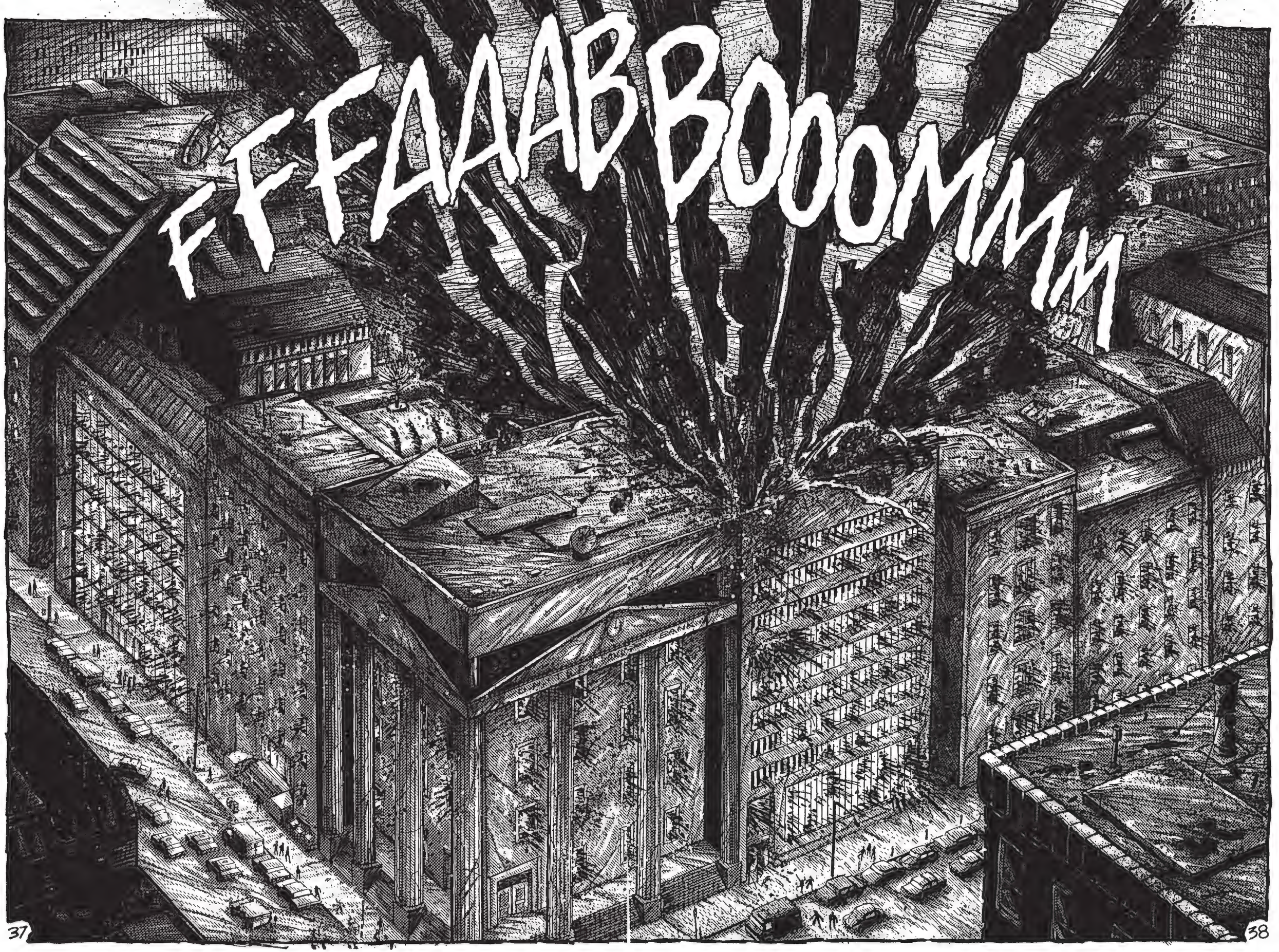
CLUNK

RRRUMBBLEE

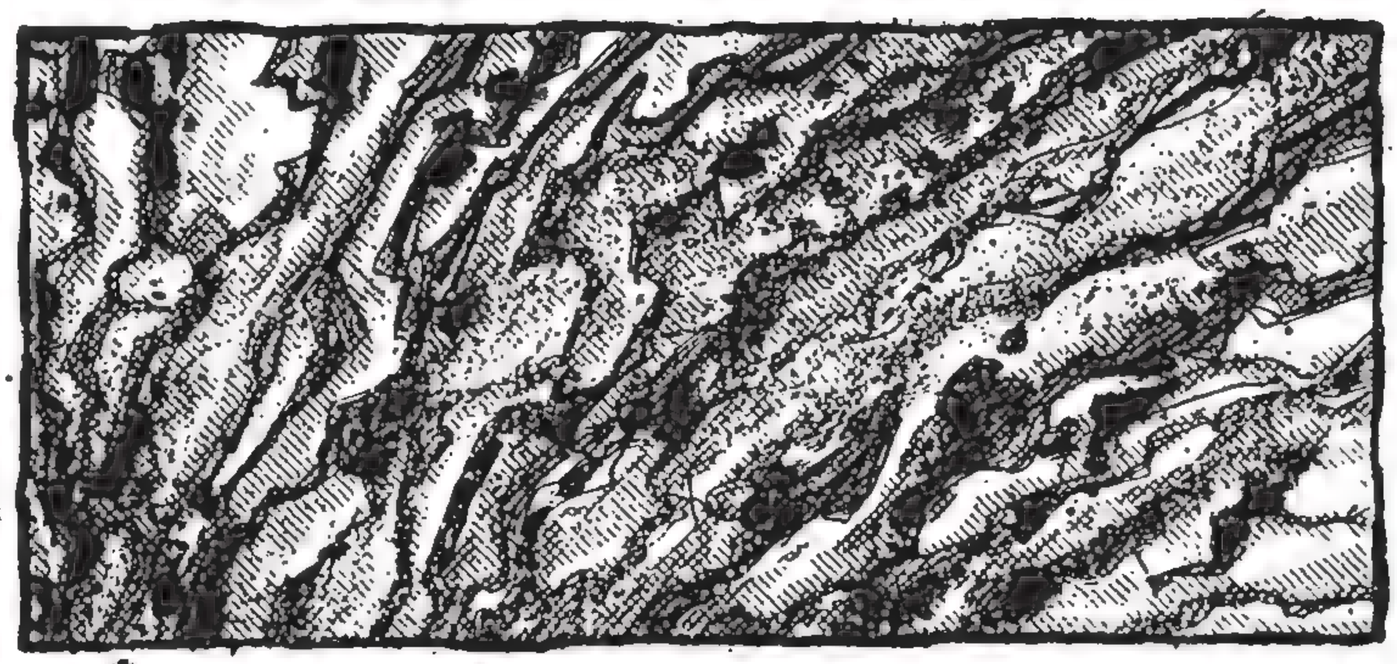
EERRTTT

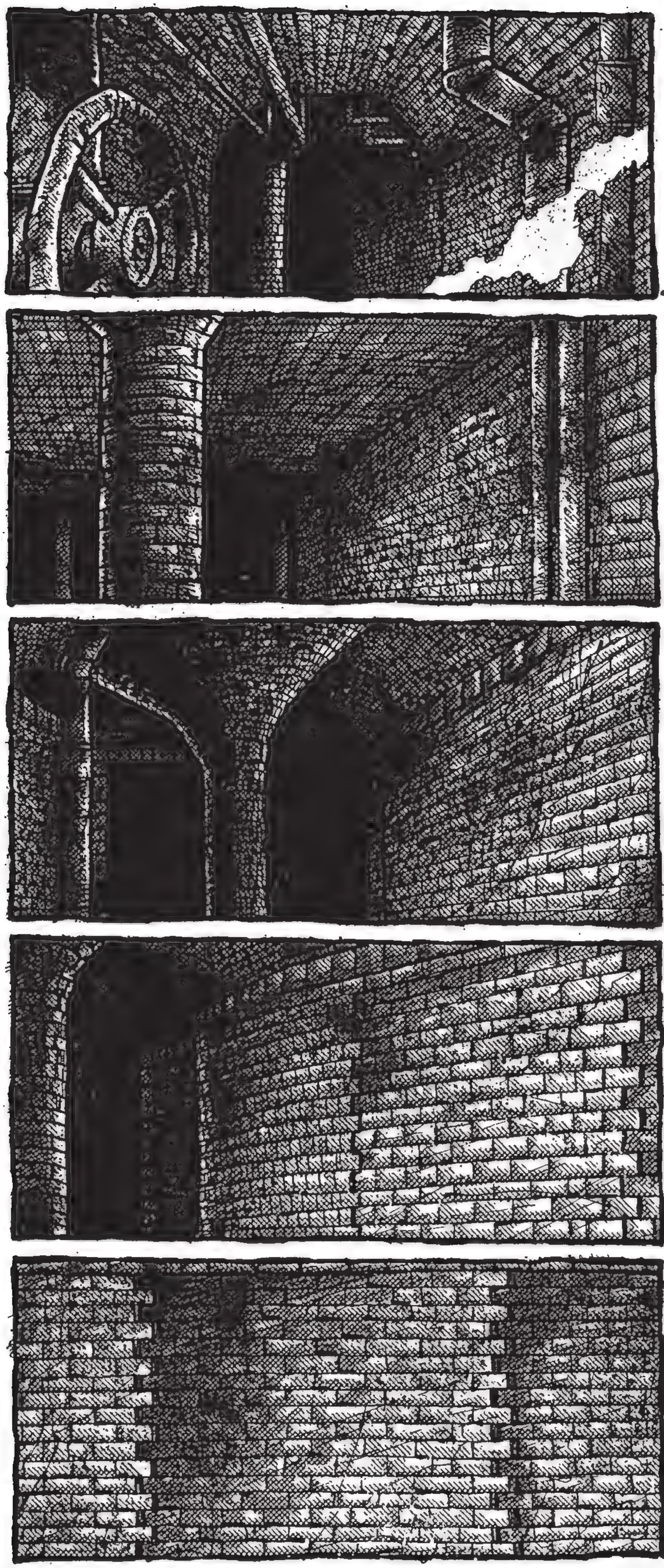
THE BUILDING... ITS GONNA...

34

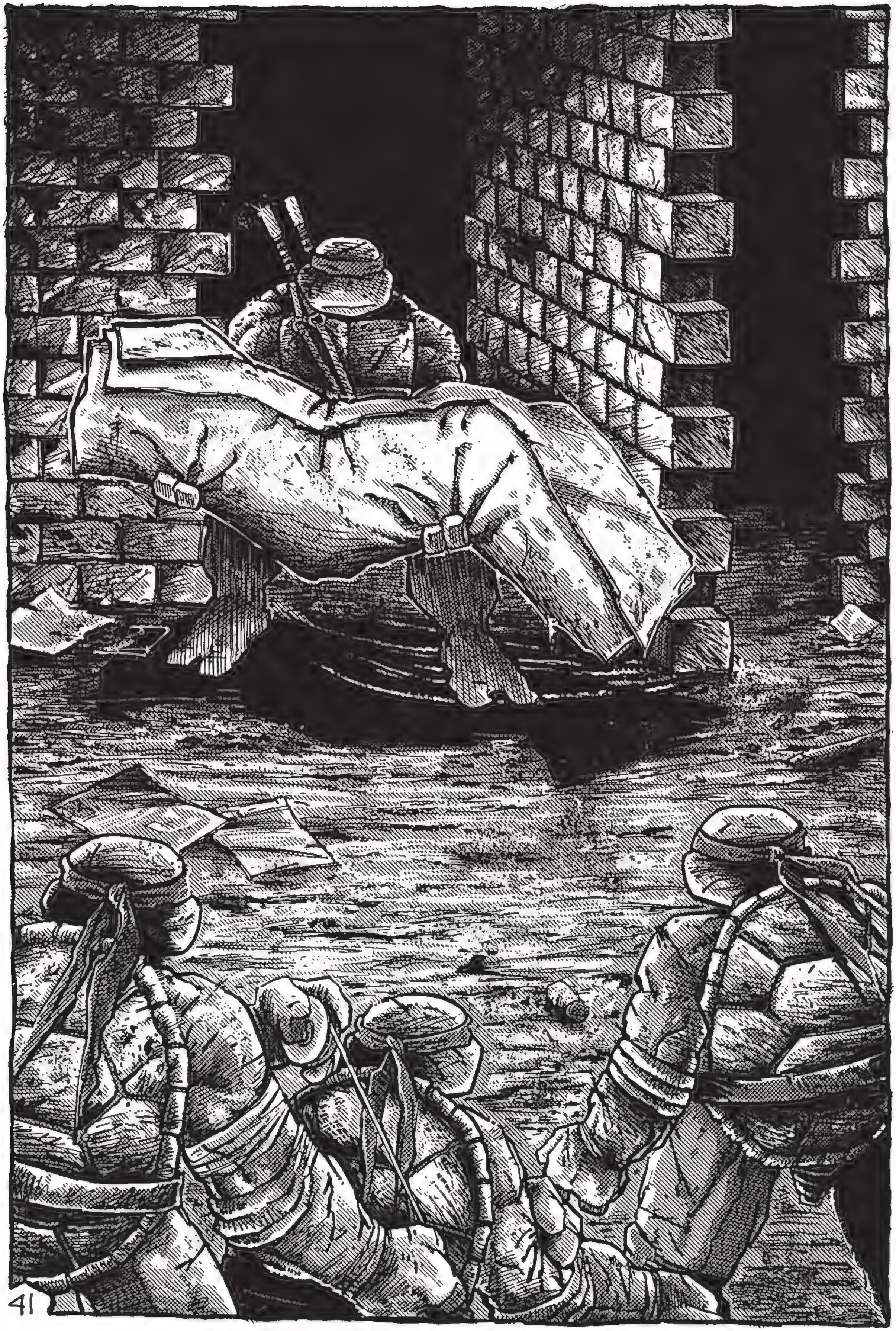

FFFADABBOOOMMM
37
38

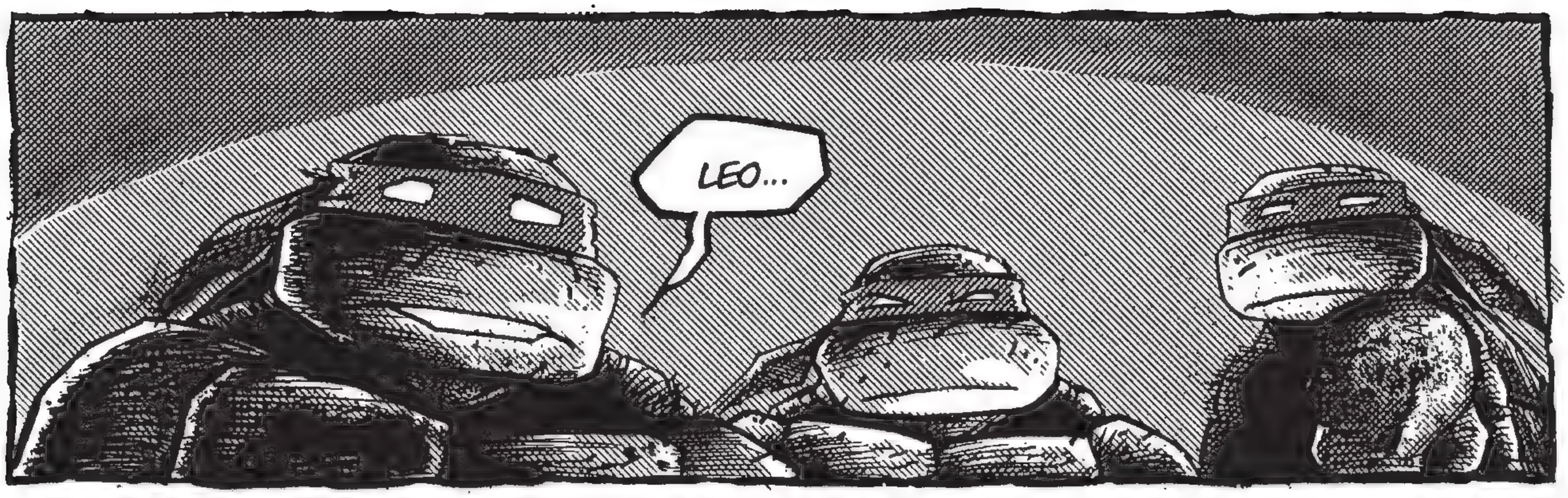
39

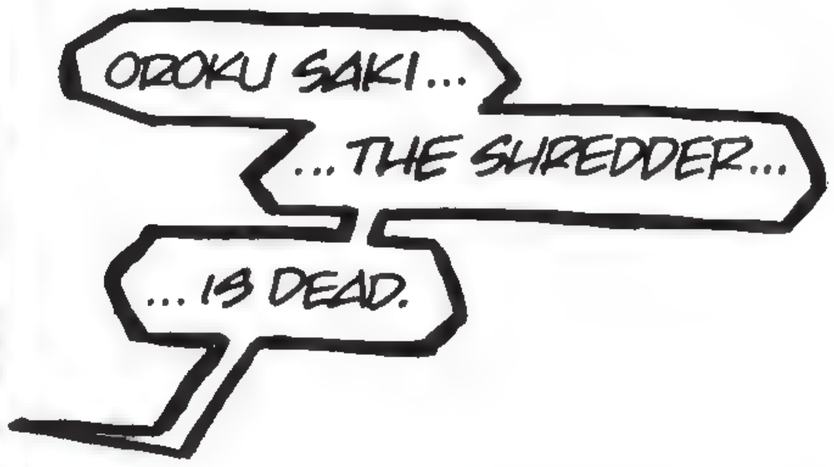


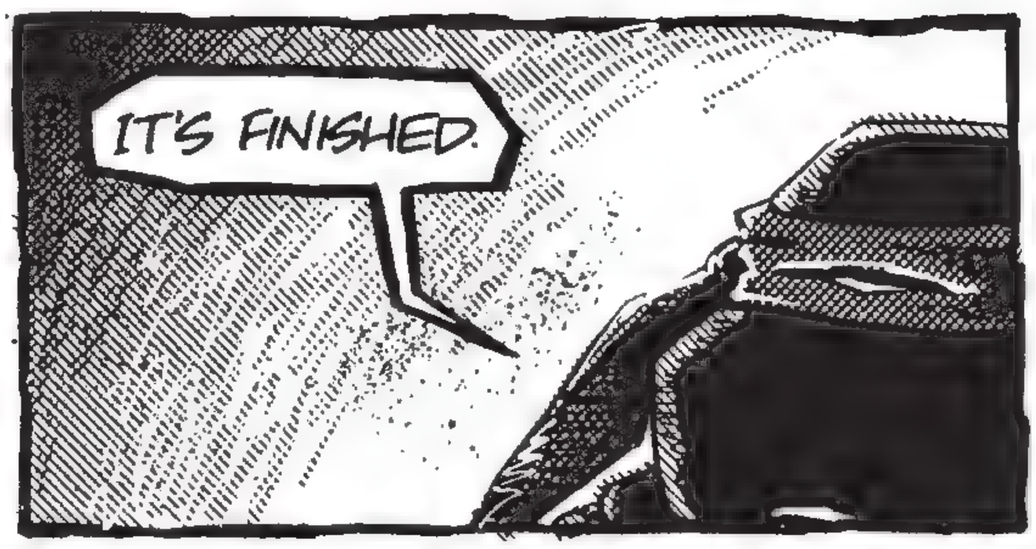


40


41


LEO...


OROKU SAKI...
...THE SHREDDER...
...IS DEAD.


IT'S FINISHED.

OUR DESTINY IS COMPLETE.

HONOR IS RESTORED.

WE HAVE... ONE FINAL TASK...

42

43
44

ANNOTATIONS

KEVIN EASTMAN

When I looked through issue #21 a bunch of times before writing this, the first word that came to mind each time was "dense." Not because the story was very complex or anything; in fact, I think all three issues together are far less complex than most of the rest of the stories Peter and I had done. I think it just seemed like the art was heavy.

I hadn't really inked that many other artists at this point, and I was feeding mostly off layouts I provided for Jim Lawson—his art had a delicate quality to it that I put a ton more linework and spatter in than I normally would, especially when there was the whole other layer of duo-shade toning on top of everything else.

There are points, especially when Raph breaks away, again, and heads off to find Shredder on his own, and is about to get jumped by some of the Shredder's Elite guard—well, I foreshadow that in a series of panels on page 6 and you can't even see what is going on in them.

Regardless, besides the darkness and the spatter and the pace—I think the tone is reflective as well—this is a suicide mission. They are here to kill the Shredder or be killed, and it is all-out action from the word "go." And it simply does not stop. I like that kind of pace, I like it a lot.

Among all of the action and the pace, I also like that we get to tell an important story for the Turtles. We get to showcase individual strengths for each of them. We get to show Raph repeating mistakes that show why he could never be the leader. We see him try to say that to Leo—in his own way—a way that keeps the group in the places they work the best. Each an individual component of a whole band, if you will. A band that, when they are working together, are at the top of their game and nearly unstoppable.

I like how in this issue we used some more standard storytelling conventions—multiple and false endings to keep the blood pressure of the reader up—and the fight scenes themselves, which I think are some of the best laid-out ones I have ever worked through, before or since (including the Leonardo one shot that was one of the most successful up to this point). Different, but cool and effective.

From Leo saving Raph from the Elite in an awesome showdown, to the rooftop battle with the Shredder where he almost lost, to where—in all the classic samurai movie gory glory—we actually have Leo take off his head, I feel like it worked. These scenes intercut with Peter's layouts of the other Turtles taking out the rest of the Foot and the lab as well. Hell, it seems to have delivered on all fronts.

Personally anyway, I thought it was one of our proudest, most complete runs—and I feel like we got to re-shut the Shredder door, once and for all. At least in the black and white comics series anyway, and for Pete and me forever.

As Leo says in the final pages, "Oroku Saki... The Shredder... is dead. It is finished. Our destiny is complete. Honor is restored. We have one final task..."

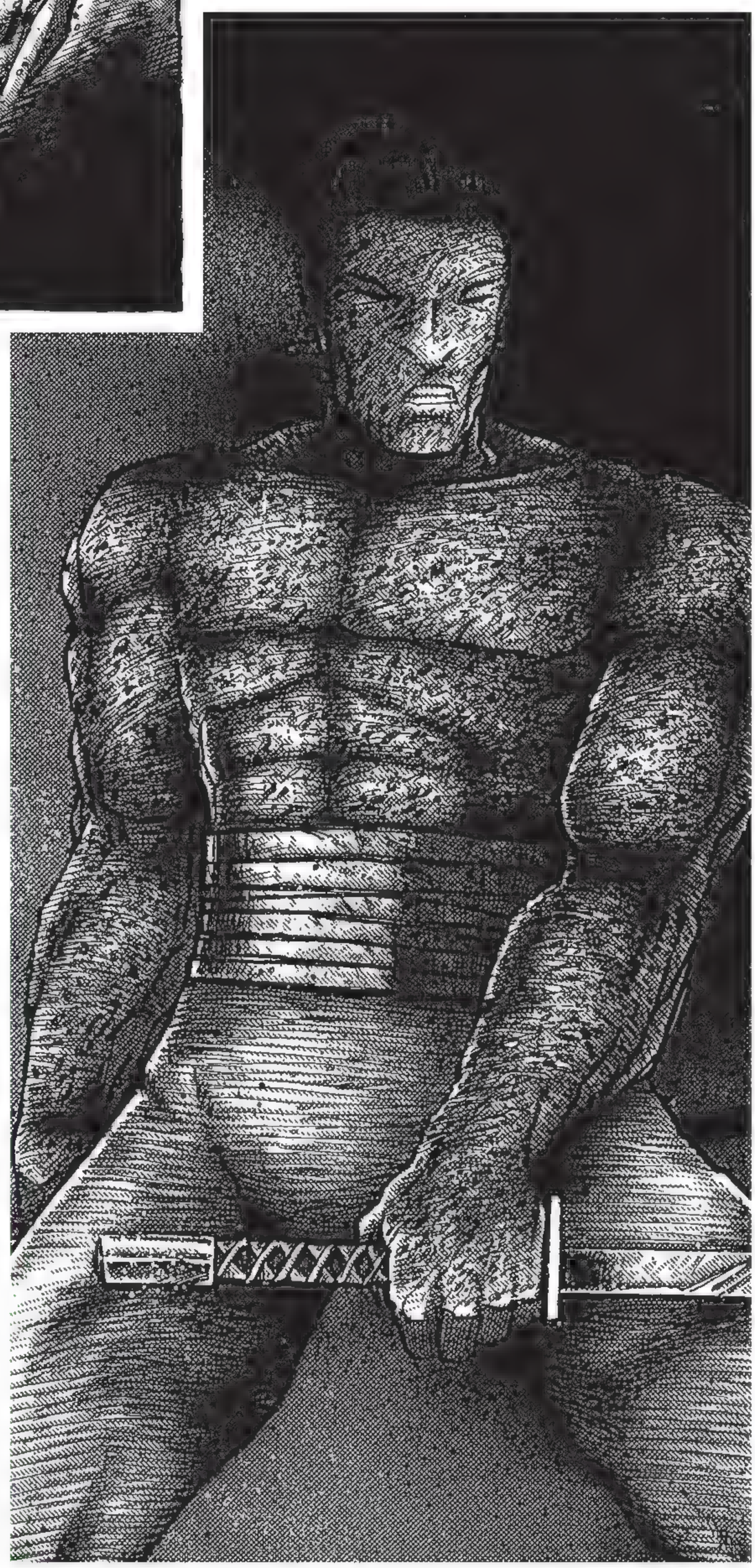
Burning his body in the final spread was the final word, and an awesome shot—what a cool way to end a killer run.

PETER LAIRD

Now we come to the conclusion of this three-issue story, and this issue was laid out by both me and Kevin. If I am remembering correctly, we broke it down this way: I took the pages that followed Mike and Don, and Kevin took those having to do with Raph and Leo.

As noted earlier, this issue was inked by Kevin. It's interesting to me to compare and contrast the way I inked the first issue in this series and how Kevin inked this one—they couldn't be more different in style. But looking back, I think it worked.

Actually, as I look these issues over, I wonder how the readers reacted to these three very different-looking books. I don't recall much, if any, negative response from the fans. (But maybe they were just being polite.)



ANNOTATIONS

Pages 1–2: A classic side-view comic book clash between opposing groups. I am pretty sure this is something Kevin did.

Pages 3–6: Lots of great Kevin Eastman fight choreography in these pages, and the first hint (in panel 3 on page 4) of how the Shredder had returned from his apparent demise in issue #1.

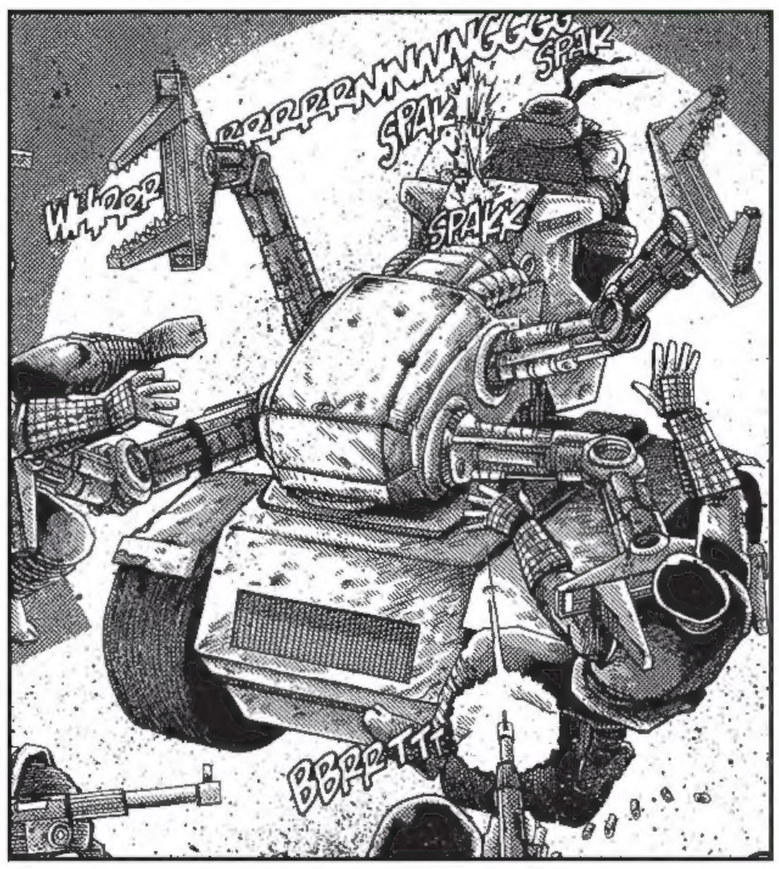
You know, as I re-read this, I'm trying to imagine the conversations Kevin and I must have had about *how* to bring the Shredder back from what we originally meant to be his death. It would be neat to have recordings of those discussions.

And starting on page 5, the reader gets a few shadowy glimpses of the Shredder's Elite Guard. If memory serves, these were really Kevin's invention. I know he at least created their look.

Pages 7–11: Raphael begins to regret his impulsiveness in going after the Shredder by himself, as his ass gets handed to him by the Elite Guard. It's a good thing for him that Leo followed Splinter's admonition: "Watch your brother's back!"

Pages 16–19: Kevin really did some wonderful stuff with this confrontation between Leonardo and Oroku Saki, a.k.a. the Shredder. I love the sequence of panels on page 18 where the Shredder walks forward toward Leonardo through three pools of light, moving ever closer to two katana blades stuck in the floor, discarding pieces of his armor as he comes… wanting this final battle between himself and this Turtle to be a pure fight between masters of the sword.

And it is.



Page 20: I can't remember if I designed this vehicle or if Jim Lawson did, but whoever was responsible, I think it looks cool. And it did the trick, allowing Raphael to help Donatello and Michelangelo, who were pinned down by those machine gun-wielding Foot ninja.

Pages 21–24, 27–28, 31, 32, and 35–36: This fight choreography between the Shredder and Leo is elegant and brutal at the same time, and shows Kevin's strengths at this kind of stuff.

However, as I look closely now at this sequence, I see a continuity error that I'd never noticed before. On page 21, in the second panel from the bottom of the page, the Shredder's attack causes Leo to drop one of his swords. On page 22, Leo fights on with one sword in panels two and four… then suddenly has two swords again in panel five… then is back to ONE sword in panels six and seven… and then is shown reaching for his second sword, which is on the floor, in panel eleven… and in panel twelve he has two swords again. I wonder if Kevin knows about this?

It would be easy enough to correct—just Photoshop out the sword in Leo's left hand in panel seven.

But I should point out that this is a minor error in a great fight sequence.

Page 26: If memory serves, the bit with Raph's misfiring of the four-barrel rocket launcher was inspired by a scene in the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie *Commando*, where Rae Dawn Chong's character does something similar—I think she's holding the launcher backwards and it fires a rocket behind her. In our scene, Raph's aim is ruined by bullets from the Foot machine guns, which knock the launcher askew.

Of course, as we see in the two-page spread on pages 29 and 30, the misfired rocket still does the job, blowing a hole in some kind of huge holding tank, letting loose a flood of something (can't remember exactly what, but it looks flammable!) which instigates a further series of explosions which inadvertently save Leo's life on page 31, because they knock the Shredder off his feet just before he can deliver a death blow to Leo's neck.

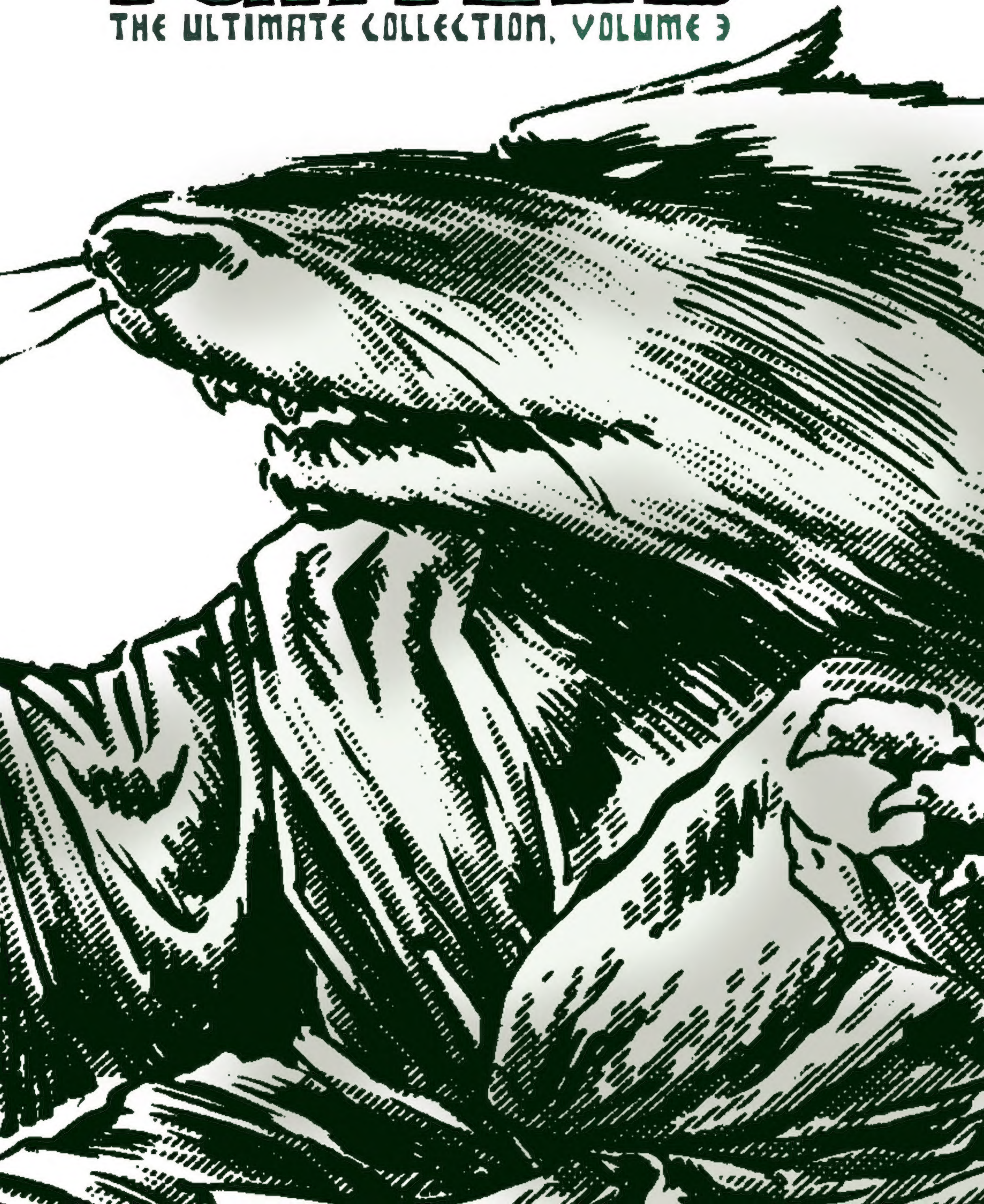
Pages 35–36: This is perhaps the most memorable two-page spread in all the comics that Kevin and I worked on together (well, maybe except for pages 2 –3 in the first issue), with the decapitation of the Shredder in mid-leap, the cut just a thin line of white across the Shredder's neck. I don't know if this is an effect that Kevin invented himself, or if it's something he saw in a Frank MIller comic, but it sure works well, regardless.

Pages 37–38: I think this may be the first (and only) time in all of the TMNT books where one two-page spread was immediately followed by another.

Pages 43–44: This final two-page spread ends this issue, and the "Return to New York" arc, in a very satisfying way—moody and intense.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION, VOLUME 3



HOTEL
STEVE'S COMICS
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES:
THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION, VOL. 3 INCLUDES:
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▸ THE STORIES "SURVIVALISTS," "THE UNMENTIONABLES," AND "DOME DOOM."
▸ THE MULTI-PART "RETURN TO NEW YORK."
▸ ANNOTATIONS BY KEVIN EASTMAN & PETER LAIRD
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